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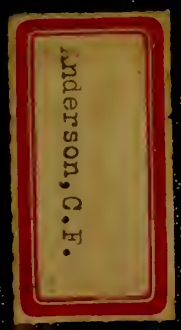

BOSTON UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL

Thesis

THE INFLUENCE OF SUSANNA WESLEY on the LIFE AND CHARACTER OF HER SON JOHN WESLEY

by

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis is to show how the teachings of Susanna Wesley influenced the life and character of her son John Wesley. In order to properly treat this subject, it was first necessary to consult Mr. Wesley's most outstanding biographers in order to obtain a knowledge of his ancestors on both sides of the family. The first two chapters of this manuscript deal with this phase of influence. The third covers in detail the system of education and training that Mrs. Wesley used, her personal concern and interest in each child individually, but especially for John. The fourth chapter covers the period of John's life spent at Charterhouse and in Oxford, up to the time he sailed for Georgia. In this chapter I have recorded a considerable part of the correspondence that passed between Mrs. Wesley and her son John, in order to show more accurately the influence of Mrs. Wesley at this time. The fifth and last chapter covers the period of John's trip to Georgia, his return to England, and the begining of his work there up to the time of his mother's death.

CHAPTER I

Parentage and Youth

It would be difficult to find in the annals of history the story of a woman whose influence on her children was equal to that of Susanna Wesley. She has very properly been called "The Foundress of Methodism," for it was indeed her influence that moulded the character of her son who was to become the leader of the movement that resulted in the "Religious Revival" in England during the eighteenth century. The Christian Church has never seen a greater general at the head of its forces than she saw in John Wesley. He was a born leader, a man of strong character and personality, capable of leading the army of his followers, not only in England, but also in the United States. Wesley inherited most of these strong characteristics from his mother who was a well educated woman, of strong understanding, profound religious convictions, and a thirst for knowledge, ever ready to discuss the problems that confronted her children, whether great or small. *

It has been said that "boys usually reproduce vividly the characteristics of their mothers," ** and this was indeed

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*Stevens, A. p. 34
**Clarke, E. p. 2

the case in the Wesley Family; for in Susanna we see the hidden springs of that energy and openness of mind that made her son so prominent as a man of mark among his fellows. It is very probable that if it had not been for John and his work in England, the memory of Susanna would have been lost to us completely. She was only considered then as the wife of a poor struggling preacher, with a large family, a narrow income, and much pride. To the common people in England there was nothing unusual about Susanna. All that was needed to bring out the real characteristics of this woman was to see them reflected in the life of her son John, through whom she was made to live in the memory as the greatest mother of recent times.

Susanna was the twenty-fifth child of Dr. Samuel Annesley, by his second wife. She was born on January 20th, 1669, in Spital Yard. She was the descendant of a good family whose name goes back before the Norman Conquest. They were aristocrats in every sense of the word. They were very closely related to the first Earl of Anglesea, Arthur Annesley, who was distinguished for his loyalty to Charles II and remained loyal to him during his exile at the cost of his own reputation and danger of losing his life. After the Restoration he was appointed to be one of the Commissioners for settling the affairs of Ireland. Here he became

Vice-Treasurer, and Receiver-General under King Charles II. The whole family of the Annesleys were prominent in the affairs of the nation.*

On the mother's side, her grand-father was John White, born at Highlan in Pembrokeshire. He was educated at Jesus College, Oxford, and later studied at the Middle Temple and became a lawyer. It is very probable that he became a sound lawyer and a prosperous man, for Eliza Clarke tells us that he had "a goodly number of Puritan clients, and in 1640 was elected M.P. for Southwark." ** He was a very active member of the party that opposed the king, Charles I, and it appears that he had a very active part to play in the events that led to the death of this king. He was very outspoken in his convictions and usually said what he thought, especially when the Episcopacy was being discussed. He abominated the offices of of deacons, priests, and bishops, but was chairman of the Committee for Religion, and in such a position he had at least to consider the cases of one hundred clergymen who lived scandalous lives. Mr. White published these cases in a little book called, "The First Century of Scandalous and Malignant Priests." He was a member of the Westminister Assembly of Divines. He was very energetic and entered into the affairs of the nation and of the church with zeal and a heated party

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* Clarke, A. p. 233-35
**Clarke, E. p. 3

spirit. For this reason, Mr. White wore himself out at an early age. He was buried with considerable ceremony in the Temple Church, and this inscription was placed on his marble tablet:

> "Here lyeth a John, a burning, shining light, Whose name, life, actions all were White."*

Dr. Samuel Annesley, the father of Susanna, was born at Kenilworth, near Warwick, in 1620. His grandmother was a very pious woman who died before his birth, but requested that the child be named Samuel, if a boy, for she said, "I can say, I asked him of the Lord."** The child was piously disposed, and at a very early age declared his intentions of going into the ministry. His heart was set on such work, and his mother began to teach him in the Sacred Word. He began to read the Bible seriously, and his interest in this became so great that he was soon reading as many as twenty chapters each day, a practice, as Clarke tells us, he followed until the end of his life. When he had once confirmed his resolution to be a Minister of the Gospel, he kept that resolution. At the age of fifteen he went to Oxford University and entered Queen's College where he took his degrees. He, like his grandson, was noted for his piety while at Oxford. In

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*Clarke, E. p. 4
**Clarke, A. p. 235

1644, under the command of the Earl of Warwick, he was ordained Chaplain of His Majesty's ship "Globe". The Earl was then Lord High Admiral and procured him his diploma of Ll. D. Samuel spent some time in the fleet, but did not like this occupation for his life's work. He left the navy, and settled at Cliff in Kent. Here he took the place of a minister who had been forced to leave his post because of his ill conduct. He had attended the people's public meetings for dancing, drinking, and making merry on the Lord's day. The people of this town were not objecting too seriously to the conduct of their former minister because they were too interested in those worldly amusements themselves. When Dr. Annesley came to Cliff, he was opposed by the people. "They assailed him with spits, forks, and stones, threatening to take away his life." He went there with a determination to change conditions and for this reason he was willing to undergo all manner of hardships for their good. He told them,

> Let them use him as they would, he was determined to stay with them till God should fit them by his ministry to profit by one better, who might succeed him; and solemnly declared, that when they became so prepared, he would leave the place.*

Continuing with this firm purpose in mind, Dr. Annesley in a few years was able to see a great reformation in that place.

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* Clarke, A. P. 236.

He kept his word as he had promised, and left to avoid anything that would even suggest inconsistency on his part. He was very conscientious in all his actions and was very careful not to permit himself to be a stumbling block to any of his young converts.

After leaving his cure in Cliff in 1652 he was directed by a very "signal providence" to a settlement in London. Here, by a unanimous choice of the inhabitants of St. John the Apostle, he was given this charge. Shortly after this he was made Lecturer of St. Paul's, and in 1658 was made Vicar of St. Giles' Cripplegate where he served two of the largest congregations in the city. His promotion to this charge was quite and honor. He was not only prominent in ecclesiastical affairs, but also in political affairs.

During the Restoration he was confirmed in the vicarage of St. Giles' Crippegate by the King, who presented the living to him on August 23, 1660. However, this did not help him because he was the leading Nonconformist of his day and was ejected when the Act of Uniformity was put into action.*

In order to explain the Act of Uniformity, it is necessary to discuss first some of the things which led to its enactment. During the troublesome reign of Charles I, the entire kingdom of Great Britain was severely agitated and the

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* Clarke, E. p. 14

existence of genuine piety was threatened with complete ruin. The nation was divided, both in politics and religion, between the Church and the Dissenters; or perhaps, more properly, between the Episcopacy and Presbyterianism. The first party contended for unlimited or absolute monarchy in the state, and episcopacy in the church: the latter was very intent on the establishment of a limited monarchy in the state and church. They felt that the church should be governed by presbyters alone, or by a union of presbyters and bishops.*

This was only a general characteristic of the divisions. There were many exceptions among individuals and these were more prominent among the Dissenters during the time of the civil wars and of the protectorate of Oliver Cromwell. Cromwell wanted to establish republicanism in the state, and Presbyterianism in the church, but his rule was one of despotism, as far as the people of England were concerned. Upon his death, they were glad to reconsider the restoration of the monarchy. They felt that this step would be the only means of healing the wounds and of restoring public confidence which had been lost during those years of severe struggle. They invited back Charles, the son of the late king, from his exile, and he accepted the invitation ascending the paternal throne on May 29, 1660 without contest or difficulty.

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*Compare - Clarke, A. p. 16

Charles was not ignorant of the circumstances which led to his recall. He knew that the Presbyterians and Independents had considerable share in the restoration, and yet the episcopal party was not willing to form a union with the Dissenters and even went so far as to establish religious intolerance in the kingdom. For this reason, the Dissenters appealed to the king for a concession in their favor, asking chiefly for full and free toleration in the exercise of their public ministry. They also hoped that at the same time the king would order a change to be made in their Liturgy that would enable them to use it with a clear conscience.

At first they were encouraged by some letters of the king and also the declaration sent to them from Breda on April 14, 1660.* He led them to believe that he was on their side and would help them in their efforts. He expressed "a strong desire to discountenance all profaneness and persecution, and to endeavour a happy composing of the differences, and healing the breaches made in the church."** He had promised them that they would not suffer because of their refusal to use the Prayer Book, nor for the omission of the ceremonies that were prescribed in that book. However, the king was not interested in the betterment of onditions in

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*Clarke, A. p. 17 and Green, R., p. 621
**Clarke, A. p. 18, 19

England and, therefore, was not capable of helping to solve the problems that confronted the nation at this time. He was more interested in his own sinful pleasures. He did go far enough to issue a commission on March 25, 1661, in which an equal number of divines and learned men were appointed on both sides of the controversy, to review and revise the Liturgy. They were also to take into consideration all matters which had been the cause of disputes, and report on them to him.

Charles expected these men to settle the questions by a majority vote, but this was not their intention at all. The bishops were determined to yield to nothing and that everything should be carried in their own way.* No effort was made by the king to stop them from doing as they pleased, and consequently uniformity of worship was enforced. Controversies arose, one after another, and conditions in the church soon reached such a low ebb that the true leaders soon were replaced by men with no religious convictions whatsoever, men who were not interested in the welfare of the nation or in the spirituality of the people. Dr. Annesley was among the ministers who were forced to leave their pulpits. Very few ministers of profound convictions could remain at their posts without lowering their religious standards, and it was mainly for this reason that so many of the better ministers were left without a living.

*Stevens, A. p. 31

Some of the demands made by the act were:

> That all and singular ministers in any cathedral, collegiate, or parish church or chapel, or other place of public worship, within this realm of England, dominion of Wales, and town of Berwick-upon-Tweed, shall be bound to say and use the Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer, celebration and administration of both the Sacraments; and all other the public and common prayer, in such order and form as it is mentioned in the said book annexed and joined to this present Act, and intitules.
>
> The Book of Common Prayer and administration of the Sacraments, and other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church, according to the use of the Church of England: together with the Psalter, of Psalms of David, pointed as they are to be sung or said in churches; and the form or manner of making, ordaining, and consecrating of bishops, priests, and deacons.
>
> And the Morning and Evening Prayers therein contained shall, upon every Lord's day, and upon all other days and occasions, and at the time therein appointed, be openly and solemnly read, by all and every minister or curate, in every church or chapel, or other places of public worship, within this realm of England, and places aforesaid.
>
> Be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, that every person, vicar, or other minister whatsoever, who now had and enjoyeth any ecclesiastical benefice or promotion within this realm of England, or places aforesaid, shall, in the church, chapel, or place of public worship belonging to the said benefice or promotion, upon some day before the Feast of St. Bartholomew, (August, 24th), which shall be in the year of our Lord God 1662, openly, publicly, and solemnly read the Morning and Evening Prayer appointed to be read by and according to the said Book and Common Prayer, at the times thereby appointed: and, after

> such reading thereof, shall openly and publicly, before the congregation there assembled, declare his unfeigned assent and consent to the use, and all things in the said book contained and prescribed, in these words and no other:
>
> > I, ..., do hereby declare my unfaigned assent to all and everything contained and prescribed in and by the book intituled, "The Book of Common Prayer, and Administration of the Sacraments and other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church of England; together with the Psalter, of Psalms of David, pointed as they are to be sung or said in churches: and the form and manner of making, ordaining, and consecrating of bishops, priests, and deacons". *

These demands, together with many other similar ones composed the Act of Uniformity. The demands were not meant only for people connected with church work, but also required schoolmasters and private tutors to be licensed by the archbishop, on penalty of imprisonment. The enforcement of the Act was felt more by the Puritans, who were trying to purify the Church of all its sham and religious form, than by any of the other parties.**

The passing of this Act by Parliament absolutely voided the king's solemn declaration to the Dissenters from Breda which made him appear disloyal to the nation. This Parliamentary Act

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* Clarke, A. p. 21,22.
**Clarke, A. p. 18

only tended to widen the gap between the Dissenters and the Established Church. It not only persecuted godly, upright men, but also was unjust in its practice of depriving these of their means of subsistence. They had prepared themselves for this work, but now they were being turned away from their pulpits with no choice in the matter and were given nothing as a substitute.

It was to be expected that a man of such strong convictions as those of Dr. Annesley should not be willing to conform to these rigid requirements of Uniformity, if he did not believe in such practices. For this reason he preferred to be ejected rather than to lower his standards. We are told that after his ejection, he met with many troubles "for conscience sake," but he was delivered from them. It is said that on one occasion God was displeased with one of his persecutors - one magistrate, while signing a warrant to arrest him, dropped dead. No doubt this is a case in which a wrong interpretation has been given to a co-incidence, but it does give us a small insight to the trend of thought in those days. People were made to fear a man of deep spirituality such as Dr. Annesley. *

Among the Nonconformists Dr. Annesley was very eminent. He had the care of many churches and was often the only means

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* Clarke, A. p. 237

of the education and subsistence of several ministers who otherwise would not have been useful in the work of the church. He was considered by the Nonconformists as a second St. Paul, and was loved by all who knew him. He was a strict tither and always set aside his tenth before spending any other part of his salary, and he also gave much for charitable purposes.*

Dr. Annesley was a most sincere, godly, and humble man. He was remarkably successful in his ministry because of his flaming zeal. He was a man of great courage and never feared the utmost malice of any of his enemies. He was a man of fine qualities, of a fine figure. His countenance was dignified, highly expressive and aimable. He had a strong and robust constitution, and was capable of any kind of fatigue. It is not at all surprising that we should find the strength of body, and of mind, and the determination of purpose in his daughter and distinguished grandson.

It is evident that he was quite an eminent preacher for he held some of the best pulpits in the kingdom. His sermons were lively and emphatic. Some of these have come to us in his writings which are not very extensive.

He was esteemed, not only by the Nonconformists, of which group he was one of the chief leaders, but also by all

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*Clarke, A. p. 238

who knew him. His strength of character has been transmitted to his children and grand-children, and there is no doubt but that to him is due much of the credit for the founding of the great Methodist Movement.

Dr. Annesley was devoted to his wife and children.* He had a large family several of whom died in infancy. There were two sons, Samuel and Benjamin. The other children were all girls, namely, Judith, Anne, Elizabeth, Sarah, and Susanna. All of these girls grew up to be handsome young women and married well. Of the other children we know nothing for there is no record even of their names.

Susanna was tall,** slim, and very pretty, and she remained so until she died. A portrait of her taken, probably early during her married life, shows her as a refined and even elegant lady of her times. Her features are slight but regular. She is dressed in simplicity which marks her refined taste and shows her pious manner.*** She was graceful and very sedate, inheriting from her father that air of aristocracy that was so prominent in his appearance. She was an accomplished young lady in every sense of the word. She had a strong mind and at a very early age in life became a student of divinity. She studied with great eagerness the current

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*Stevens, A. p. 35
**Clarke, E. p. 8
***Stevens, A. p. 37

controversies which existed between the Church of England and the Nonconformists. At the early age of thirteen she had carefully weighed the arguments on both sides of the controversies and had decided the problem for herself. Her faculties were well balanced and with this gift she had a sense of piety which she retained throughout life. Her decision regarding her religious belief was entirely contrary to that of her father, but he was not a bigot in his opinions of the matter. He well recognized the ability of his daughter to reason the matter out for herself, and therefore, allowed her liberty of conscience. She chose to unite herself to the Church of England rather than remain among the Nonconformists. She accepted the Creed and Forms of the Church of England and strictly adhered to them as long as she lived. Evidently Dr. Annesley did not object to this move of his favorite child, or if he did, he never made his objections known. He never did any thing to cause her to revoke her decision. We have no record of any disapproval in this respect, not even when she married the "rigid orthodox" Samuel Wesley.

However wrong some may think Susanna's decision was, we have to recognize the fact that this effort on her part to judge for herself at such an early age in a subject that was so complicated, was indeed a great action and displays the real strength of mind of which Susanna was possessed.

Religion was one of her chief interests and from her very childhood some of the most intricate questions were early in her mind. It is no wonder that she should be able to reason out such great problems and reach such conclusions when we consider the training she must have received from her father. She was also well versed in the Scriptures. Her mind was a practical one but she never allowed the cares of the home to interfere with her own reading. She read books on mysticism and was able to advise her sons when they confronted the problem while in Oxford and to recall them to the true way of the Scriptures and to set them right. Susanna was well versed on many subjects. Eliza Clarke tells us that she probably had sufficient acquaintance with the French language to be able to read easy authors, but her interests were not primarily in literature. At the age when she would have ordinarily been reading literature, she appears to have been studying the religious questions of the day. Her training at home, however, was such that she was able to teach her children and give them a very good education. She trained her sons until they were old enough to leave home and go to school at Charterhouse. The daughters, however, received all their education from Mrs. Wesley. They were all well versed in Literature, Greek, Latin, and Religion.

Susanna did not let her search for knowledge and truth fade after her marriage to Samuel Wesley. She was constantly seeking to better fit herself for the task which was to be hers in the training of her children. In one of her letters to her son, Samuel, written to him while he was in Oxford, she relates some of her experiences which took place in her early life at the time of her decision in connection with her religious choice.

> There is nothing I now desire to live for, but to do some small service to my children; that, as I have brought them into the world, I may, if it please God, be an instrument of doing good to their souls. I had been several years collecting from my little reading, but chiefly from my own experience and observation, some things which I hoped might be useful to you all. I had begun to to correct and form into a little manual: wherein I designed you should have seen what were the particular reasons which prevailed on me to believe the Being of a God, and the grounds of natural religion, together with the motives that induced me to embrace the faith of Jesus Christ; under which was comprehended my own private reasons for the truth of revealed religion. And because I was educated among the Dissenters, and there was something remarkable in my leaving them at so early an age, not being full thirteen, I had drawn up an account of the whole transaction, under which I had included the main ofthe controversy between them and the established church as far as it had come to my knowledge; and then followed the reasons which had determined my judgment to the preference of the Church of England.*

*Whitehead, J. p. 34

It would have been indeed interesting to have this essay of Mrs. Wesley concerning the smaller details of her reasoning and her thinking at the time she made her momentous decision for the Church of England. However, this manuscript was consumed by the flames of the Epworth fire and not even her son Samuel was privileged to read it because the fire took place before she was able to mail the account to him. *

In one of her private meditations in which she was thanking God for His mercies to her, she enumerates some of the things for which she is thankful. She thanks God for the privilege that has been hers to have been born in a Christian country, for early initiation and instruction in the first principles of the Christian religion; for her good examples in parents and several of the family; for good books and ingenious conversation; for preservation from ill accidents, once from violent death; for her marriage to a religious orthodox man; that she was by him first drawn off from the Socinian heresy and afterwards confirmed and strengthened by Bishop Bull. ** It was her independence of thought that led her into the Socinian opinions, but she abandoned these after investigating them more thoroughly.

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* Whitehead, J. p. 33.
** Whitehead, J. p. 34.

It would have been [illegible] to say this
[illegible] of [illegible]. Having [illegible] the [illegible] of the
[illegible] and [illegible] it [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] for the [illegible] of [illegible]. However, this [illegible]
[illegible] was [illegible] by the [illegible] of [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

She had a special gift for letter-writing. Her letters deal with many varied subjects. Some are practical every-day questions, and others are problems that require profound thought. One example of her interpretative mind in questions involving reasoning and understanding is the occasion of the discussion on à Kempis "Imitation of Christ". John was greatly confused because of its content and wrote to his mother for advice. In response to his letter, Susanna wrote the following:

> I take Kempis to have been an honest, weak man, who had more zeal than knowledge, by his condemning all mirth or pleasure as sinful or useless, in opposition to so many direct and plain texts of Scripture.*

Among her other literary works we have a very outstanding discussion is one that would not be discreditable to the theological literature of her day, and has come to us in its complete form in the "Memoirs of the Wesley Family" by Adam Clarke. She also began a work on "The Natural and Revealed Religion" in which she told of her reasons for renouncing Nonconformity, but, unfortunately, this work together with one on the "Eucharist" and other minor works were destroyed in the Epworth fire.

At the time of Susanna Wesley people seemed to have had more time to devote to writing and meditation. Susanna

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*Stevens, A. p. 38

made it a practice to record her thoughts on various subjects to which she gave considerable thought during her hours of daily devotion and meditation. She began this practice of piety and devotion at a very early age and continued it until death. She had an hour set aside for devotional purposes in the morning and evening and during these hours she read her Bible and prayed and meditated upon the Scriptures. In records of these hours of devotion, she gives personal testimonies concerning her confidence in her religious hopes. She repre- these times as joyful hours spent in communion with God. One writer says that her reflections give evidence of the happiest blending of good sense and religious fervor. She was never too busy to neglect this most important part of her life, and she instilled these devotional practices so forcibly into the lives of her children that they were not able to get away from them.

Susanna was, as Southey has put it:

> ...an admirable woman, of highly improved mind, and a strong and masculine understanding, an obedient wife, and exemplary mother, a fervent Christian.*

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*Southey, R. p. 40

CHAPTER II

Marriage to Samuel Wesley

It was in the spring of 1689, when Susanna was nineteen or twenty years of age, that she was married to the Reverend Samuel Wesley. He also belonged to a distinguished family of educated gentlemen and noblemen. He was born in Whitechurch in 1662, and was seven years older than Susanna. In several ways his character was contrasted with Susanna's, but they both possessed a marked vein of independence of thought which must have been hereditary, for it was transmitted further to their children. Samuel Wesley's grandfather, Bartholomew Wesley, joined the Puritan party after having served the Established Church in several parishes under Charles I. However, he was ejected at the Restoration because he refused to conform to the Five Mile Act. The Five Mile Act prohibited any preacher to approach within five miles of any of his former parishes, or any borough town after he had been ejected for his nonconformity. Samuel continued preaching, as he had opportunity, until his death which was caused by the premature death of his son John who was also persecuted because of his independence of thought. John was true to the independent and vigorous character of his father

to the very end. He was educated at Oxford and here made a name for himself as a brilliant scholar in Oriental languages.* He was indeed remarkable for his religious zeal and like other members of his family, he kept strict notes on his every-day life and was very careful how he spent his time. He was a very devout man and at the Restoration he would not conform to the use of the Common Prayer book because he had conscientious scruples against such forms. For this he was called to appear before the Bishop of Bristol, but Wesley was a stronger character than the Bishop himself for before he was through, Wesley had convinced him that what he was doing was right and that he would do wrong if he adhered to the law and order of the Church of England when it was contrary to his convictions.** However, this act was not enough to save him from imprisonment, for shortly after this incident he was thrown into prison for the same cause. The same thing happened again, after he had been released by an order of the King's Council. This occurred in 1661 and the following year the Act of Uniformity went into effect and Wesley would not yield to it either. He cared nothing for the opinion of people, as far as his religious opinions were concerned, for he preached against this act before soldiers and magistrates. He gave his farewell address before his own

*Whitehead, J. p. 18
Clarke, A. p. 85

congregation who wept sorrowfully because of his leaving them to become an outcast. He seems to have had no peace wherever he went. The authorities hunted him to impose upon him a fine for breaking the law. He left Whitechurch and went with his family to Melcombe where the authorities sought him and even imposed upon his landlady a forfeiture for letting him stay at her house. He finally found refuge among some dissenting friends of his who were willing to help him. A wealthy gentleman let him have a house free of rent and Wesley lived in peace there with his family for almost two years until the Five Mile Act drove him out. He continued to preach whenever he had an opportunity but the new law made it hard for him and he was not able to escape from it. He was sent to prison on four different occasions, once for a year and another time for three months. The strain of such a life finally was too great for him and he died at the age of thirty-four. John Wesley was also a devout and firm man, and an able theologian, traits which were prominent in his father, son, and grandson.

Samuel Wesley inherited the ancestral spirit of the family. He also had a strong soul and was designed for the ministry of the Nonconformists, but at a very early age, after training some and preparing for this work, he became convinced that he should change his opinions. This he did; and not

wanting to have the disfavor of his family as to his newly acquired views, he arose early one morning and set out walking to Oxford. He was about sixteen years of age, and had only two pounds and sixteen shillings in his pocket. However, he entered Exeter College and although he had no prospects of help of any kind, he had the determination to go to school. This he did and became a splendid scholar. He was very industrious and assisted the younger students by writing their exercises and instructing any who chose to employ him. In this manner he supported himself until he took his Bachelor's degree. This shows us that Samuel Wesley was a young man of diligence and resolution, with a great love for knowledge and truth. While in Oxford, he displayed the real characteristics of the Wesley family in his methodical habits and was careful to remember the prisoners and the poor people of the town. He made it his business to visit the prisons and relieve the necessities of the inmates by ministering to their bodies and souls. It was no doubt his example that inspired his sons in later years to follow in his foot-steps, and when they were in Oxford, he wrote to them thus:

> Go on, on God's name, in the path into which your Saviour has directed you, and that wherein your father has gone before you.*

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*Stevens, A. p. 44

After he finished his work at Oxford, he received his deacon's orders at the hands of Dr. Sprat, Bishop of Rochester, in the absence of the Bishop of London. He was given a curacy that afforded him twenty-eight pounds a year and remained with this for a year. Then he was made chaplain on board the Man of War and served there for one year. He then returned to London where he served a cure for two years. During this time he married Susanna Annesley. The income from his curacy was only thirty pounds per year, but he doubled this by his writings. He had become acquainted with Mr. Dunton, a London publisher who at the time was courting one of Susanna's older sisters, and through his help, was able to publish many of his works. While in London, he had opportunity to display some of the truly Wesleyan characteristics. The "Declaration of Indulgence" of James II had been issued and some of the friends of the king tried to solicit the support of Samuel through his literary genius. They promised very tempting sums of money, if he would yeild and support the king. However, Samuel did not think the measure was lawful, he rather believed that this declaration was a Papal design. Therefore, he would not read it in his pulpit, and he even denounced it in his sermons. Samuel was strong and outspoken in his conviction, regardless of the result that his opinions might bring upon him. In one of his sermons he

preached from this text:

> If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us out of thy hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up. *

The offer made to Samuel by the friends of the king was a tempting one, for at the time he was living under somewhat straigtened circumstances, supporting a wife and child; however, Susanna was a very thrifty wife and managed to make ends meet, thus enabling them to stay out of debt as long as they remained in London.

Samuel never tired in his duties as pastor. He was a constant preacher, and according to his ability fed his flock with the pure doctrines of the gospel. He was diligent in visiting the sick and caring for the poor, giving advice in adverse circumstances, and always looking out for the conduct of his parishioners. His otspokenness and firey temperament often caused trouble, but he was determined to make his people walk uprightly as long as he felt responsible for their actions. However, this responsibility as pastor did not divert his attention from his literary pursuits. It seems that his favorite study was the Scriptures in the Original languages in which he was most untiring. He worked constantly on one thing or

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* Stevens, A. p. 45, Whitehead, J. p. 24.

[illegible] from their land.

> If I do so, you and your [illegible] is also
> [illegible] on my land. I [illegible]. But
> if not, you [illegible] land. I [illegible], but
> [illegible] before my [illegible], nor [illegible] the
> [illegible] [illegible] [illegible].[1]

In other words to insist on the rights of the king was a [illegible] one, for in the time he was living under [illegible] [illegible] circumstances, supporting a wife and [illegible] [illegible]. Nothing was a very humbly life [illegible] in such a [illegible], those [illegible] lived to obey and if [illegible] so long as they [illegible] in [illegible].

Daniel Webster lived in his [illegible] as [illegible]. He was a [illegible] [illegible], not accustomed to the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]. He was [illegible] to [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

another which dealt in some way with the Scriptures. His "Life of Christ," written in verse, although perhaps not so important for its literary value as poetry, is an excellent example of his knowledge of the Bible. He also wrote a history of the Old and New Testaments, but his most remarkable work along these lines was his work on "Job."

In a letter to his son, John, written on January 26, 1725, he says,

> I have some time since designed an edition of the holy Bible in octavo, in the Hebrew, Chaldee, Septuagint, and the Vulgate; and have made some progress in it. What I desire of you on this article is: 1. That you would immediately fall to work, and read diligently the Hebrew text in the Polyglott, and collate it exactly with the Vulgate, writing all, even the least variations of differences between them. 2. To these I would have you add the Samaritan text in the last column but one; which is the very same with the Hebrew, except in some very few places, differing only in the Samaritan character, which I think is the true old Hebrew. In twelve months' time, you will get through the Pentateuch; for I have done it four times the last year, and am going over it the fifth, and collating the two Greek versions, the Alexandrian and the Vatican, with what I can get of Symachus and Theodotion.*

Samuel Wesley shows us here the confidence he had in the ability of his son to help him in this work, and also gives us an insight as to the thoroughness of his study of

*Whitehead, J. p. 26

the Scriptures.

After living in London for two years, the rector was transferred to the curate of South Ormsby, near Epworth. Here he received an income of fifty pounds a year. While at this place his family increased to six children, but with the true spirit of English paternity, he welcomed every child as a gift from God, and struggled manfully for their maintenance, providing for them as best he could. Mrs. Wesley was left to worry with the problem of making their earnings supply their needs. In writing to his Bishop years later, Samuel records the following:

> Last night my wife brought me a few children. There are but two yet, a boy and a girl, and I think they are all at present. We have had four in two years and a day, three of which are still living . . . Wednesday evening my wife and I joined stocks, which came to but six shillings, to send for coals.*

The curacy of South Ormsby had been secured for Rev. Mr. Wesley through the efforts of a nobleman, the Marquis of Normandy and things progressed quite smoothly for some time. One of Wesley's acts, which was very characteristic of his temperament, caused him to loose this job. This Marquis of Mormanby had a house in the parish, where a woman, who lived with him, usually stayed. She was constantly visiting Mrs. Wesley and insisted on being very intimate with her, but

*Fitchett, W. H., p. 25

Mr. Wesley refused to allow his wife to associate with such a woman. One day when Mr. Wesley came home, he found this woman sitting in his home visiting his wife. Without saying a word, he walked up to her, took her by the hand, and led her in a very unceremonious manner out of the room. This act won the disfavor of the noble man and brought about the resignation of the rector from the curacy of South Ormsby.

After having to resign his living at South Ormsby, Mr. Wesley published his poem in ten books, entitled "The Life of Our Blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," and dedicated it to Queen Mary. This was a long dry poem, as Pope called it, and his brother-in-law, Dunton, would not publish it. However, it went through the second edition and was reprinted a century later. This dedication won for Samuel the curacy of Epworth where he and his family remained until his death. In this poem which Samuel dedicated to Queen Mary, he also gives a sweet and appreciative portrait of his wife:

> She graced my humble roof and blest my life,
> Blest me by a far greater name than wife;
> Yet still I bore and undisputed sway,
> Nor was't her task, but pleasure to obey:
> Scarce thought, much less could act, what
> I denied.
> In our low house there was no room for pride;
> Nor need I e'er direct what still was right,
> She studied my convenience and delight.
> Nor did I for her care ungrateful prove,
> But only used my power to show my love:
> Whate'er she asked I gave without reproach or grudge,
> For still she reason asked, and I was judge.
> All my commands requests at her fair hands,

And all her requests to me were all commands.
To other thresholds rarely she'd incline:
Her house her pleasure was, and she was mine;
Rarely abroad, or never but with me,
Or when by pity called, or charity.*

While at Epworth, the rector and his wife underwent many trials and harships which they bore with great fortitude. The town of Epworth was small and the people who lived there were dreadfully wicked. They disliked the outspoken manner of the rector and made it very unpleasant for all concerned. He preached against their wickedness and urged them to pay their tithes. The people were sorely vexed because of his incessant urging, and at one time they would pay only in kind. On one occasion, we are told that Mr. Wesley went into a field where the tithe corn was laid, and discovered a person cutting the ears of corn with a pair of shears, and filling a bag with them. Without saying a word to him, he siezed the man by the arm and led him into the market-place of the town, where he opened the bag, turned it inside out before the crowd and declared that the man had robbed that corn from the tithe field, he then walked away quietly, leaving the man confounded before his neighbors.**

Epworth was at that time only a small town of about two thousand persons who were generally employed in the

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*Clarke, E. p. 35,36
**Stevens, A. p. 47

culture and preparation of hemp and flax. Mr. Wesley was determined to change those profane people into respectable Christians, and was continuously admonishing them of their degradation and sin and urging them to mend their ways. Southey tells us that "the zeal with which he discharged his duty in admonishing of their sins, excited a spirit of diabolical hatred in those whom he failed to reclaim."*

There were several attempts made to burn the parsonage, while the Wesleys lived in Epworth. The first few were unsuccessful, but they finally succeeded in their last one. About midnight one night, some pieces of burning wood fell from the roof of the house on the bed in which one of the children was sleeping. Just at this time Mr. Wesley heard the alarm of fire on the street, but never dreamed that it was his own house on fire. Opening the door he was met by a great cloud of smoke. He saw that the roof of his own house was all but ready to cave in. Immediately he rushed to give the alarm to the other members of his family, for he was sleeping apart from them on account of Mrs. Wesley's illness at the time. His first thought was of Susanna and the older girls whom he ordered to hurry and run for their lives. Then he rushed into the nursery where the maid and five of the younger children

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*Southey, R. p. 45

were sleeping and called them. She snatched the younger one and bade the others to follow her; the three older ones did so, but John was not awakened by the noise and slept on peacefully for a few minutes, and in the midst of the alarm and confusion of the fire, he was forgotten by the other members of the family. Father Wesley was down stairs trying to get the door open when he discovered that the keys had been left upstairs; he dashed back up only a few minutes before the stairway was in flames. When the door was opened, the wind blew into the house with such force that it was impossible to save anything. Some of the children escaped through the windows, but Mr.s Wesley was not able to climb to the windows nor could she reach the garden door to make her escape. Consequently she was forced to wade through the flames. She prayed that God would help her in this crucial moment to escape alive from the flames of the fire and that He would spare her children and her husband. She did escape alive, although she had no clothes and had received some minor burns on her hands and face.

Just then, John was heard up in the nursery, crying for help. There was no possible way to reach him through the interior of the house, for the flames had swept in and had consumed the stairway. The father ran to the stairs like a

mad-man and realizing that it was impossible to reach his son, knelt, and in agony commended his soul to God. John was awakened by the light of the flames, thinking it was day. He called to the maid to take him up, but he received no answer. Then he proceeded to get up; he ran to the door but could not get out, for the flames were beating in from every direction. He then climbed up on a chest that was standing by the window, and looking out, cried for help to those on the outside. Fortunately, the house was not high, and they were able to reach that window by one man standing on another man's shoulders and in that way rescue the little six-year-old boy. Just then the roof of the house fell in on the room in which John had been: one moment later would have been too late to save him. That was an hour of rejoicing for that happy family when they discovered that everyone had been spared even though they were unable to save any of their earthly goods. Mr. Wesley felt that then and there was the time and pleace to stop and thank God for sparing his wife and his eight children, for he said, "Let the house go, I am rich enough." *

The persecutions that the Wesleys suffered while at Epworth were at times more than they could bear. The rector was never the type to give up his High Church and State principles to evade persecutions. These parishioners were

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* Stevens, A. p. 47

constantly seeking to find fault with him and in addition to injuring his cattle, cutting off the feet of his dog, and doing many other things to annoy the family, they had him arrested and sent to prison for a small debt which he was utterly unable to pay at the time. He remained there for about three months. While there he wrote the Archbishop of York a letter in which he displayed again his own native spirit. "Now I am at rest for I am come to the haven where I have long expected to be; and I don't despair of doing good here, and it may be, more in this new parish than in my old one."*

He preached to the prisoners on Sundays, and was consoled by the encouragements received frequently from his good wife. She was having a hard time at home trying to keep soul and body together on the small amount of money she had, and yet she sent Samuel her rings thinking they could be sold and would thus be a means for his relief. However, he would not accept them and sent them back to her.

Many other instances of similar nature took place during this faithful rector's cure at Epworth, but he continued faithfully doing his duty there. When he was advised by some of his friends to leave Epworth, he replied that he was not willing to leave a flock like a coward just because the perse-

*Southey, R. p. 45

cutions were coming his way. He felt somewhat like his son John felt in later years, when he was being persecuted. He said, "'Tis like a coward to desert my post because the enemy fires thick upon me. They have only wounded me yet, and I believe cannot kill me."

Amid the trials and difficulties that the Wesleys encountered in Epworth, one of the greatest problems that confronted Mrs. Wesley was the education of her children. She could not afford to see them running wild with the other children of the village and was thus forced to provide her own system of education for them. Her method of training and educating her children will be discussed at length in the following chapter.

CHAPTER III

Teaching and Training

The system of education which Susanna Wesley followed in the teaching and training of her children was unique and was peculiarly her own. She started this system with her first child, Samuel, and continued the practice of it with all her children. She felt very keenly the responsibility that was hers in the education of her children, and in the salvation of their souls. For this reason she worked diligently at her task, sacrificing all else for their welfare.

Their education started from the very time they began to show any signs of temper or displeasure, for if they cried at all, she made them "cry softly". One of her first principles of child psychology was to "conquer the child's will" and to make them "fear the rod". One of the reasons she gave for this was that by this means the child escaped from many corrections that he would no doubt otherwise have had. Mrs. Wesley did not seem to think that her system of education was applicable in all cases, but she says it did the work for her. Since her family was large and the public system of education

of her day was very poor, she had to provide some way whereby her children would not be deprived of their literary training. At the same time she gave them that practical and spiritual training that they would not have gotten in other school.

Their life at home was directed in a very methodical manner from the very beginning. Susanna tells us that her children were never permitted to eat between meals. As soon as they had grown strong enough, they were limited to three meals a day. The smaller children ate at a little table which was placed beside the larger one of the family and were overlooked there, either by the older ones or by the servants. When they were able to handle a knife and fork, they were promoted to the larger table to eat with the grown people. Their plates were served and the children were made to eat that which was served to them without asking any questions or calling for anything that was not on the table. If it became necessary to call for something, they were to whisper to the maid and she in turn asked Mrs. Wesley's consent, before granting their request. They were permitted to drink "small beer" and in the morning, and sometimes at night, they were allowed to have a small spoon of meat. Whatever they had for their meal, they were never permitted to eat more than one thing, and that was given them "sparingly enough." The practice of going into the kitchen and asking for something to eat after the meal was over was positively forbidden.

The only time that they were allowed to have anything to eat between meals was during sickness, and this was seldom necessary. The children were so accustomed to eating and drinking what was given them, that when any of them were sick, it was not hard to make them take any kind of medicine, regardless of how unpleasant it might have been.*

The child was made to follow a regular method of living in such things as they were capable of doing, such as dressing and undressing, changing their linen, and attending to their personal needs. The child at first was laid into his cradle awake, and rocked to sleep in order to bring him to a regular course of sleeping. This was first, three hours in the morning, and three in the afternoon; then two hours, until they needed none at all. Six hours of the day were spent at school and at six o'clock in the evening, they held family prayer. As soon as this was over, they had their supper and then at seven they were washed and put to bed. They began with the youngest and all of the children were in bed by eight o'clock.

All the children were taught the Lord's prayer as soon as they could speak and were taught to repeat it constantly at rising and at bed time. When they became a little older,

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*Tyerman, L. p. 20

they added a prayer for their parents, or a short catechism or portions of scripture until they were able to form their own prayers.

They were taught at a very early age to distinguish between the Sabbath and the days of the week. They were also taught reverence during family worship, a practice that has been greatly neglected in modern times. Immediately after they offered a short prayer, this they did at first by signs, before they could kneel or speak.*

The management of the Wesley household was handled in such a way that the children enjoyed their hours of play while at the same time they were not permitted to be noisy and boistrous. Mrs. Wesley believed in the principle that if a child is taught from infancy to be calm and quiet in his actions, he will continue to be so in later years. This certainly worked in the case of her children, especially with John. He was very methodical in all his actions and in all his work, having been taught to be so from his earliest childhood.

Mrs. Wesley tells us that none of her children were taught to read before they were five years old, with the exception of Kezzy, but she was longer learning than any of the other children. The day before the child became five

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*Stevens, A. p. 55

years old, the house was set in order to avoid all interruptions. No one was to enter the room in which Mrs. Wesley and her new pupil were, from the hours of nine to twelve, or from two to five. During this time the child was taught with the greatest of care the letters of the alphabet, and only one day was devoted to this lesson. All of the children learned their letters in one day except Molly and Nancy who were a day and a half learning them perfectly. Samuel seems to have been the most brillant one of the children for she says:

> Samuel, who was the first child I ever taught, learned the alphabet in a few hours. He was five years old on the 10th of February; the next day he began at the first chapter of Genesis. He was taught to spell the first verse, then to read it over and over, till he could read it offhand without any hesitation.*

She says she never remembered having to tell this child the same word twice for he always remembered it wherever he saw it. All the children learned by the same method and they used the Bible as their text book. It is probable that the Wesleys could not afford the usual text books of the times and for this reason Mrs. Wesley used the Bible but, no doubt, she wanted to instill in their minds also the practice of reading their Bibles and learning the great truths that are in it. Never was a lesson to be left until

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* Clarke, A. p. 320

[illegible]

it had been perfected. The patience and care with which Mrs. Wesley taught her children was certainly remarkable. She is said to have repeated the same thing to one of her children twenty times before he learned it, and when her husband was commenting on it, she told him how glad she was that she had repeated it the twentieth time for if she had not, all her efforts would have been lost.

The morning session of their class work opened, as a rule, with the singing of a psalm and a prayer and the afternoon session was ended in like-manner. Each child was to read what he had learned during the day at the end of the afternoon session.

The question has been made, "Why did Mrs. Wesley postpone the teaching her children their letters till they were five years of age?" This may be partly because of her experience and partly because of necessity. We are told that in the case of the education of her first child, Samuel, she was unable to start teaching him until he was five because he did not learn to speak until he was between four and five years old. Both Mr. and Mrs. Wesley were concerned about Samuel because he was slow in learning to speak. There was a cat in the house which was a great favorite with Sammy. Frequently he would carry it around and hide with it in private places. One day Sammy disappeared, and Mrs. Wesley

looked for him in every place she could think of, but could not find him anywhere. She called for him and became greatly alarmed for his safety. At last she heard a little voice from under the table, saying, "Here am I, mother!" She immediately looked down and to her great surprise saw Sammy and his cat. After this, Samuel talked regularly and without any hesitation.* It was probably on this account that Mrs. Wesley was forced to start her first child in school at the age of five. Also, two of her daughters began a little before they were five and their process of education seems to have been retarded. For this reason she decided that the five year old plan was best.

The greatest of respect and manners were taught them for their parents, for God, and for their brothers and sisters. The children were never to address each other by their first names, but were always to say, "Brother" so and so, or "Sister" so and so. The servants were to grant them nothing except when they were addressed with humility and respect, and the children all knew this and obeyed. Courtesy and gratefulness were stressed and the children were always loved by the servants because of their observance of these rules.

The children were never permitted to contend with each

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* Clarke, E. p. 42

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[illegible]

other. In case of differences the parents were to settle them and their decision was never disputed. For this reason there were very seldom any disputes or misunderstandings among them. Clarke tells us that they had the fame of being the "most loving family in the country of Lincoln!" It is really surprising what a difference the right kind of management of children makes in their entire future outlook on life. Mrs. Wesley had the personality that is needed for a system of education such as she used in the training of her children.

In order to have a more detailed account of Mrs. Wesley's system of education, I shall quote her letter to John written from Epworth, July 24, 1732.

> Dear Son, - According to your desire, I have collected the principal rules I observed in educating my family.
>
> The children were always put into a regular method of living, in such things as they were capable of, from their birth; as in dressing and undressing, changing their linen, etc. The first quarter commonly passes in sleep. After that they were, if possible, laid into their cradle awake, and rocked to sleep; and so they were kept rocking till it was time for them to awake. This was done to bring them to a regular course of sleeping, which at first was three hours in the morning, and three in the afternoon; afterward two hours, till they needed none at all. When turned a year old, (and some before,) they were taught to fear the rod, and cry softly, by which means they escaped abundance of correction which they might otherwise have had; and that most odious noise of the crying of children was rarely heard in the house, but the family usually lived in as much quietness as if there had not been a child among them.

As soon as they were grown pretty strong, they were confined to three meals a day. At dinner their little table and chairs were set by ours, where they could be overlooked; and they were suffered to eat and drink (small beer) as much as they would, but not to call for anything. If they wanted aught, they used to whisper to the maid that attended them, who came and spake to me; and as soon as they could handle a knife and fork, they were set to our table. They were never suffered to choose their meat, but always made to eat such things as were provided for the family. Mornings, they always had spoonmeat; sometimes at nights. But whatever they had, they were never permitted at those meals to eat more than one thing, and that sparingly enough. Drinking or eating between meals was never allowed, unless in case of sickness, which seldom happened. Nor were they suffered to go into the kitchen to ask anything of the servants when they were at meat: if it were known they did so, they were certainly beat, and the servants severely reprimanded.

At six, as soon as family prayer was over, they had their supper; at seven the maid washed them, and, beginning at the youngest, she undressed and got them all to bed by eight, at which time she left them in their several rooms awake, for their was no such thing allowed of, in our house, as sitting by a child till it fell asleep.

They were so constantly used to eat and drink what was given them, that when any of them was ill, there was no difficulty in making them take the most unpleasant medicine, for they durst not refuse it, though some of them would presently throw it up. This I mention to show that a person may be taught to take anything, though it be never so much against his stomach.

In order to form the minds of children, the first thing to be done is to conquer their will, and bring them to an obedient

temper. To inform the understanding is a work of time, and must with children proceed by slow degrees, as they are able to bear it; but the subjecting the will is a thing which must be done at once, and the sooner the better; for by neglecting timely correction, they will contract a stubbornness and obstinacy which are hardly ever after conquered, and never without using such severity as would be as painful to me as to the child. In the esteem of the world they pass as kind and indulgent, whom I call cruel parents; who permit their children to get habits which they know must be afterward broken. Nay, some are so stupidly fond, as in sport to teach their children to do things which in a while after they have severely beaten them for doing. When a child is corrected it must be conquered, and this will be no hard matter to do, if it be not grown headstrong by too much indulgence. And when the will of a child is totally subdued, and it is brought to revere and stand in awe of the parents, then a great many childish follies and inadvertencies may be passed by. Some should be overlooked and taken no notice of, and others mildly reproved; but no willful transgression ought ever to be forgiven children, without chastisement, less or more, as the nature and circumstances of the offense may require. I insist upon conquering the will of children betimes, because this is the only strong and rational foundation of a religious education, without which both precept and example will be ineffectual. But when this is thoroughly done, then a child is capable of being governed by the reason and piety of its parents, till its own understanding comes to maturity, and the principles of religion have taken root in the mind.

I cannot yet dismiss this subject. As self-will is the root of all sin and misery, so whatever cherishes this in children insures their after wretchedness and irreligion; whatever checks and mortifies it promotes their future happiness and piety. His is

still more evident if we further consider that religion is nothing else than the doing the will of God, and not our own; that the one great impediment to our temporal and eternal happiness being this self-will, no indulgence of it can be trivial, no denial unprofitable. Heaven or hell depends on this alone. So that the parent who indulges it does the devil's work; makes religion impracticable, salvation unattainable, and does all that in him lies to damn his child, soul and body, forever.

Our children were taught, as soon as they could speak, the Lord's Prayer, which they were made to say at rising and bed time constantly; to which, as they grew bigger, were added a short prayer for their parents, and some colects, a short catechism, and some portion of Scripture, as their memory could bear. They were very early made to distinguish the Sabbath from other days, before they still could not well speak or go. They were as soon taught to be still at family prayers, and to ask a blessing immediately after, which they used to do by signs, before they could kneel or speak.

They were quickly made to understand they might have nothing they cried for, and instructed to speak handsomely for what they wanted. They were not suffered to ask even the lowest servant for aught, without saying, Pray give me such a thing; and the servant was chid if she ever let them omit that word.

Taking God's name in vain, cursing, and swearing, profaneness, obscenity, rude ill-bred names, were never heard among them; nor were they ever permitted to call each other by their proper names without addition of the term brother or sister.

There was no such thing as loud talking or playing allowed of; but every one was kept close to business for the six hours of school. And it is almost incredible what

a child may be taught in a quarter of a year by a vigorous application, if it have but a tolerable capacity and good health. Kezzy excepted, all could read better in that time than the most women can do as long as they live. Rising out of their places, or going out of the room, was not permitted, except for good cause; and running into the yard, garden, or street, without leave, was always esteemed a capital offense.

For some years we went on very well. Never were children in better order. Never were children better disposed to piety, or in more subjection to their parents, till that fatal dispersion of them, after the fire, into several families. In those they were left at full liberty to converse with the servants, which before they had always been restrained from; and to run abroad to play with any children, good or bad. They soon learned to neglect a strict observance of the Sabbath; and got knowledge of several songs and bad things, which before they had no notion of. That civil behavior, which made them admired when they were at home, by all who saw them, was in a great measure lost; and a clownish accent and many rude ways were learned, which were not reformed without some difficulty.

When the house was rebuilt, and the children all brought home, we entered on a strict reform; and then was begun the custom of singing psalms at beginning and leaving school, morning and evening. Then also that of a general retirement at five o'clock was entered upon. When the oldest took the the youngest that could speak, and the second the next, to whom they read the psalms for the day, and a chapter in the New Testament: as in the morning they were directed to read the psalms, and a chapter in the Old; after which they went to their private prayers, before they got their breakfast, or came into the family.

There were several by-laws observed among us. I mention them here because I think them useful.

1. It had been observed that cowardice and fear of punishment often lead children into lying, till they get a custom of it which they cannot leave. To prevent this, a law was made that whoever was charged with a fault, of which they were guilty, if they would ingenuously confess it, and promise to amend, should not be beaten. This rule prevented a great deal of lying; and would have done more, if one in the family would have observed it. But he could not be prevailed upon, and therefore was often imposed upon by false colors and equivocations, which none would have used but one, had they been kindly dealth with; and some, in spite of all, would always speak truth plainly.

2. That no sinful action, as lying, pilfering at church or on the Lord's day, disobedience, quarreling, etc., should ever pass unpunished.

3. That no child should be ever chid or beat twice for the same fault; and that, if they amended, they should never be upbraided with it afterward.

4. That every signal act of obedience, especially when it crossed upon their own inclinations, should be always commended, and frequently rewarded, according to the merits of the case.

5. That if ever a child performed an act of obedience, or did anything with an intention to please, though the performance was not well, yet the obedience and intention should be kindly accepted, and the child with sweetness directed how to do better for the future.

6. That propriety be inviolably preserved; and none suffered to invade the

> property of another in the smallest matter, though it were but of the value of a farthing, or a pin, which they might not take from the owner without, much less against, his consent. This rule can never be too much inculcated on the minds of children; and from the wants of parents or governors doing it as they ought, proceeds that shameful neglect of justice which we may observe in the world.
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> 7. That promises be strictly observed; and a gift once bestowed, and so the right passed away from the donor, be not resumed, but left to the disposal of him to whom it was given, unless it were conditional, and the condition of the obligation not performed.
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> 8. That no girl be taught to work till she can read very well; and then that she be kept to her work with the same application, and for the same time, that she was held to it in reading. This rule also is much to be observed; for the putting children to learn sewing before they can read perfectly, is the very reason why so few women can read fit to be heard, and never to be well understood.*

It is very probable that some admirers of the Wesleys do not agree with Mrs. Wesley in every detail of her educational system. However, we should consider that the time in which the Wesleys lived was entirely different from modern times. Her system would not be practicable today in all respects, but we will have to admit that many of our modern problems would be greatly relieved, if we only had more mothers who would deal with their children in somewhat the

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*Clarke, A. p. 325-30, Wesley's Journals V. I, p. 388-394

same way in which Susanna dealt with her children.

We see very clearly in the life of John the reflection of his mother's teachings. Mrs. Wesley was much concerned about the welfare of this, her favorite child, especially after the incident of the fire, when she was made to realize more than ever that there was a special purpose in the life of this child. She devoted one evening each week for a private conference with each child, at which time she discussed with them their spiritual problems and taught them the greater principles and higher values of life. She had reserved Thursday evening for John and this John always remembered. When he was in Oxford and was facing the problems of doubt and inconsistency, he asked her to devote the "small portion of Thursday evening" to prayer and meditation for him. Mrs. Wesley promised to do so and always had a special concern for John.

In one of her private devotions, when John was only eight years old, she mentions him in a way that shows how much her heart was concerned about the formation of his mind for religion:

> Evening, May 17, 1711. Son John.
>
> What shall I render to the Lord for all his mercies? The little unworthy praise that I can offer, is so mean and contemptible an offering, that I am even ashamed to

> tender it. But, Lord, accept it for the sake of Christ, and pardon the deficiency of the sacrifice.
>
> I would offer thee myself, and all that thou hast given me; and I would resolve, O give me grace to do it, that the residue of my life shall be all devoted to thy service. And I do intend to be more particularly careful of the soul of this child, that thou hast so mercifully provided for, than ever I have been; that I may do my endeavor to instil into his mind the principles of thy true religion, and virtue. Lord, give me grace to do it sincerely and prudently, and bless my attempts with good success.*

Mrs. Wesley's prayers were answered, for it was at approximately this same time that John began to receive the sacraments and her heart was indeed gladdened.

Although Mr. Wesley was the Rector of Epworth, and it would seem more logical for him to be more concerned about the soul salvation of his children, the credit for the great zeal and deep spiritual life of their children was due to Susanna. She was at home all the time and cared for the physical, mental, and spiritual needs of the family. Mr. Wesley's many duties in London were constantly calling him away from the home and for this reason he was unable to attend to these duties as he should have.

In another letter addressed to John written by Mrs. Wesley in later years in regards to the education of her

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*Whitehead, J. p. 217

children, she tells of what it took to educate her children as she did.

> No one can, without renouncing the world in the most literal sense, observe my method; and there are few, if any, that would entirely devote above twenty years of the prime of life in hopes to save the souls of their children, which they think may be saved without so much ado; for that was my principal intention, however unskilfully and unsuccessfully managed.*

It is very true that every ounce of strength that Mrs. Wesley had was used to help her children as well as the people of the town of Epworth. She was so very interested in the salvation of souls that she was willing to go the limit of her own "respectability," (for it was not a very respectable thing in those days for a woman to lead a public meeting of any kind.) This she did while Rev. Wesley was away in London attending the sittings of convocation, which he firmly believed was a part of his duties, and he usually went to it whether he could afford it or not. While he was away, there were no afternoon services at the Church and consequently Mrs. Wesley held private prayermeetings with her children in the home, and the servants were also permitted to attend. She usually read a sermon and then engaged in religious conversation. When the neighbours and some of the parishioners heard of these prayermeetings, they asked for the privilege

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*Clarke, E. p. 47

of attending. Mrs. Wesley was somewhat reluctant at first for she feared that it was not quite proper for her because of her sex, but they insisted on coming. She did not think their presence would interfere much with their devotions.* It was not long until from thirty to forty persons attended regularly. This went on for some time and one day she, with the help of her daughter Emilia, ran across an account of the Danish Missionaries in Mr. Wesley's study and they found it so interesting that Mrs. Wesley wanted to do more than ever in the salvation of those people of Epworth. She looked for the very best sermons in Mr. Wesley's collection and began to speak with more freedom than ever. The number of listeners grew rapidly and soon there was not enough room for all of them in the apartment. News of what was going on reached Mr. Wesley while he was still in London and the account was badly misrepresented to him by a jealous man of the parish who was not in favor of Mrs. Wesley's actions. Consequently, Mr. Wesley wrote home demanding an explanation. He said that he thought it "looked particular" for her to be conducting such meetings because of her sex, and because he was away at the time. For these reasons he thought best for her to get someone else to read for her. Mrs. Wesley, however, was not the type of a person who would let her husband

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*Clarke, A. p. 386, 387

or anyone else have his way, if what he was objecting to was being done for a good cause. For this reason, Mrs. Wesley began her reply to him, thanking him first for the plainness and faithfulness with which he had dealt with her in this matter. * "As to it looking particular, I grant it does," she said, "but so does everything else that is serious or that in any way advances the glory of God, or the salvation of souls, if it be performed out of a pulpit or in the way of common conversation; because in our corrupt age the utmost care and diligence has been used to banish all discourse of God, or spiritual concerns, out of society, and if to be ashamed of nothing so much as of confessing ourselves to be Christians." Her reply is, as Abel Stevens has said, "characteristically earnest, but submissive to his authority." **

> She says: "I chose the best and most awakening sermons we had. Last Sunday, I believe, we had above two hundred hearers, and yet many went away for want of room. We banish all temporal concerns from our society; none is suffered to mingle any discourse about them with our reading and singing. We keep close to the business of the day, and as soon as it is over they all go home. And where is the harm in this?" ***

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* Whitehead, J. p. 39
** Stevens, A. p. 57
*** Ibid.

or anyone else been his way, it does he see obviously to see being been for a good cause. Not-bite reason, are, neither begin our fault is not, something are first for the activities the institutions will which is not deal with so to this action. [1] "He is it looking particular, I great it time," his said. "Not do make everything that that is action or time is not the industry his alone to not. Or the activities of world, it is to interested not of a job or is in my of school investigating business is not religion is the it. that when one action is not some not to better all. Education or God, or scientist economy, not it society. And if is a school of nothing so much as of investigating students to is institutions." Her body is. a total therefore life will. "Unfortunately women, not subsidies to the university." [2]

Her eyes: "I choose the just not good economic science to not. Just study, I believe, or not above the student science. and you may most make the most of some. To relate all important education from our society; some is interested in studies and literature social that will the problem the studies. It even stops to the measure of life not, not is not as if it not just not or some. Not where is the use is study."

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1. Bulletin, 1. p. 32
2. Zenkova, 1. p. 3
in Ibid.

Mrs. Wesley was also gifted in the art of debate and reasoning and could very seldom be changed in her opinions. In this case, where she knew there was no harm, those jealous parishioners of Mr. Wesley's curate tired to make her discontinue her work by telling Father Wesley that his wife was holding a "conventicle" in his home. However, her arguments for the continuance of the meetings were stronger than those of Mr. Wesley against them, and the meetings continued until his return. Mrs. Wesley wanted a definite command from her husband, if he wanted her to discontinue these meetings, for in her letter she says, "Do not advise, but command me to desist." John seems to have inherited this positiveness from his mother and thus passed it on to Methodism. Stevens tells us in his History of Methodism that "in this emphatic expression of a deep, compound feeling, a powerful conscientious impulse, and a fixed principle of submission to rightful authority, there was dondensed the very law of her son's course, as the founder and legislator of a sect." This was what gave Methodism its permancence.*

After the perilous fire in which the family lost practically all of their early possessions and barely escaped alive, they were forced to be separated for some time until a new rectory was completed. As soon as they were able to move into

*Clarke, A. p. 388

their new home, a reform began, for as Mrs. Wesley has told us, the children had learned many things which were not even thought of before. She began with great diligence to correct these shortcomings and it was not long until she had them very well trained again in their routine manner of living.

The greatest concern now was to get "Jacky" well trained in order that he might enter a public school and be a credit both to himself and to his parents. He was a very "disputatious youngster", given to cold deliberation and much argument. He seemed to require a reason for everything he did. His father reprimanded him one day when he found him in one of these usual fits of disputation. He said, "Child, you think to carry everything by dint of argument; but you will find how little is ever done in the world by close reasoning." Apparently nothing could ever be done by John, if he could not find a reason for it. His father said to his mother one day concerning his attitude, "I profess, sweetheart, I think our Jack would not attend to the most pressing necessities of nature, unless he could give a reason for it."*

However, with this power of reasoning, John had consistency of conduct which made him an admirable child and showed the strength of his mind to be very much like that of his mother. John liked to reason things out methodically,

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*Tyerman, L. Vol. I. p. 18

but he did not argue for the sake of argument. He also inherited from his mother that patience and spirit of fortitude that helped him in the endurance of pain and affliction without complaint. For, shortly before he was to leave home for the Charterhouse, he was taken sick with the small-pox, but he bore this terrible affliction with "manly and Christian fortitude". His father was away in London at the time, but his mother wrote to him and said: "Jack has borne his disease bravely, like a man, and indeed like a Christian, without complaint."*

There is no doubt that the teachings of Susanna Wesley made a greater imprint on the life of John than on the life of any of the other children. Her first concern was for John, especially after his rescue from the fire, for she felt very keenly the responsibility that was hers in his education and religious training. God had spared his life for a specific purpose and it was up to her to give him the training that would better fit him for this his life's work. It is to her we owe much for the foundation of the Methodist church, for it began in that practical methodism in the Epworth rectory and soon through the efforts of her sons, we see the development of the great ecclesiastical Methodism which has spread throughout the world and is still doing a wonderful work in the salvation of souls.

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*Stevens, A. p. 57

CHAPTER IV

Charterhouse and Oxford

When John Wesley was thirteen years old, he went to Charterhouse school in London. He was aided financially by the Duke of Buckingham who at that time was Lord Chamberlain of the royal household. His help meant much to the Wesleys.

John was now passing out from under the direct influence of his efficient mother. He was going to meet new people, to have new experiences, and to face the world with its problems, comparatively alone. However, he was not quick to forget the home training which he had received from his mother during his childhood days in Epworth.* He had the background that was to help him in his life.

In his physical appearance, John was small and delicate. This fact made him look weak, but on the contrary he was comparatively strong. Following his father's advice, John ran around the Charterhouse garden three times every morning and he believed that it was to this practice much of his strength was due. The amount of food allowed the students of Charterhouse school was at best very meager. To add to this, the older students took from the younger boys that amount of meat that was theirs; thus for considerable part of the time that John

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*Stevenson, G. J. p. 170

spent at Charterhouse, he lived on bread and water. This, however, did not create a distaste in John's mind for Charterhouse. He bore these trials with great fortitude and, in spite of them all, he cherished fond memories of this school that remained with him throughout life. His daily practice of running around the garden three times each day made him appreciate the place more than ever and, in after years, John made a special effort to visit the school at least once each year. He would walk through the courts and grounds, remembering with pleasure the happy days he spent there in school. *

In discussing John Wesley's school-days at Charterhouse, we must consider some of the statements that have been made by some of his critics with regard to his religious stand while there. Tyerman tells us that Wesley lost much of his piety while at Charterhouse. "John Wesley entered the Charterhouse a saint, and left it a sinner." ** he says. His grounds for such a statement, however, would appear to be somewhat inconsistent with what we know about the characteristics of John. It is possible that while Wesley was away from home for the first time, he became somewhat negligent of his religious life, which was a very natural thing to do as soon as he got out from under the strict discipline of home life. We find

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* Tyerman, L. p. 20 (Compare)
** Ibid, p. 22

usually that children who have been under strict rules at home have a tendency to become slack in their daily habits, especially in the affairs or matters of religious life, because the many new experiences which a child has on entering a boarding school, attract his attention and occupy his time in such a way that he is soon separated from the routine of his home life. However, it would be difficult to think of John as a sinner at this time of his life, in spite of the fact that he himself said he had backslidden from his former faith. It is very possible that John was tempted to doubt his religious experience on this occasion, just as he was tempted in later years when he was struggling over his assurance of salvation. But he continued in a form of religion, for he tells us that he read the Scriptures, and said his prayers both in the morning and in the evening. There is no doubt but that this practice of worship was so deeply instilled in his daily routine of life at home that, in spite of the distractions that came his way while at Charterhouse, he could not get entirely away from his religious training. In recording some of his experiences at this time, John gives us a little insight as to his thoughts in regard to his hopes for salvation. He gives us three reasons by which he had this hope: first by not being as bad as other people, second by having still a kindness for religion, and third reading the

Bible, going to church, and saying prayers. It is quite evident that John was passing through a dark period of adjustment and at the same time was tempted to doubt his own religious beliefs.

Tyerman relates another incident by which he tries to prove that John was a sinner while at the Charterhouse school. He tells us of an anecdote which was told on Wesley by the Rev. A. Tooke, who was master of the school at that time. The master is said to have been observing the behaviour of the children at school and his attention was drawn to Wesley who was often found among the younger boys of the school instead of being with the boys who were nearer his age. Mr. Tooke called Wesley in to his study one day and asked him what was the reason for his actions, and to this John replied, "Better to rule in hell than to serve in heaven." This, says Tyerman, is a proof of his ambition. He had a great ambition to be a leader, (a ruler) and showed this spirit from youth. However, the statement as it is given to us, -- a quotation from Wesley's own words -- may have been spoken by him more for wit and humour than for actual facts. John was quite humorous at times and this may have been one of those occasions. Or, if John really meant what he said, there may have been good reasons for his not wanting to associate with the older boys. His small features were against him; and too, he may have

remembered the treatment which he received from the older boys when he first went to Charterhouse. We do not know exactly why John should have made such a statement, but at any rate, the inference made here regarding the malicious and ambitious spirit of Wesley is entirely contrary to all the other traits of his character and must be discounted.

It was while John was at the Charterhouse school that the mysterious noises began to be heard at the Epworth rectory. John was intensely interested in the minutest detail regarding the mystery and wrote home to inquire all about it. In response to his inquiries, he received numerous detailed reports from different members of the family. His father and mother and also two of his sisters wrote to him concerning this. The reports are somewhat similar in their general contents, but we can obtain a few different slants on the mystery from the interpretation that each of them gave it.

No doubt there had been a form of credulity in "spirits" which existed in the family from generations back. Mrs. Wesley had taught the children this also, and we can observe from the letters that were sent back and forth from Epworth to London that there was still a belief there that those "noises" were not just for the fun of it, but that they had a purpose. Mrs. Wesley interpreted them, at first, to be a warning that some danger had befallen some member of the family, such as

sickness or death, and for this reason she became greatly concerned about the welfare of the absent members of the family. It had been some time since she had heard from Samuel who at that time was at Westminster as head usher, and in order to help the family and relieve them of part of the burden of educating the two younger boys, Samuel sent for Charles who was then only eight years old. Thus all three of the sons were away from home at the time of the incident of the mysterious "noises". Mrs. Wesley's anxiety about the safety of her children became more intense because the noises at the rectory apparently were becoming more and more frequent instead of ceasing. Finally she received a letter from Samuel in which he assured her of their good health and safety and for a while she was at ease, but the noises continued. She still had a feeling that there was some significance connected with these "noises". It was about this same time that she ceased hearing from her brother who was in India, and consequently, she connected the mystery with the death of her brother.

At the beginning the "noises" caused considerable alarm in the rectory, especially among the children who were still at home. However, the father was somewhat dubious as to the reports that had been made and was determined to find out for himself whether there was any truth in them. His opinion

regarding the incidents is more clearly told by himself in a letter written to Samuel:

> Though I am not one of those that will believe nothing supernatural, but am rather inclined to think there would be frequent intercourse between good spirits and us, did not our deep lapse into sensuality prevent it, yet I was a great while ere I could credit anything of what the children and servants reported concerning the noises they heard in several parts of our house. Nay, after I had heard them myself I was willing to persuade myself and them that it was only rats or weasels that disturbed us; having been formerly troubled with rats, which were frightened away by sounding a horn, I caused a horn to be procured, and made them blow it all over the house. But, from that night they began to blow, the noises were more loud and distinct, both day and night, than before; and that night we rose and went down, and I was entirely convinced that it was beyond the power of any human creature to make such strange and various noises.*

Evidently the Rector was somewhat perturbed over the mysteries and was determined to investigate them, but apparently he was not successful in his attempt.

Emilia tells how the noises sounded to her--they were hollow and different from anything else she had ever heard.

> It would answer to my mother, if she stamped on the floor and bade it. It would knock when I was putting the children to bed, just under me, where I sat. One time Kezy, pretending to scare Patty, as I was undressing them, stamped with her foot on the floor, and immediately it answered with three knocks, just in the same

*E. Clarke, p. 151, 152

> place. It was more loud and fierce if any one said it was rats, or anything natural.*

Mrs. Wesley related in a letter (in which she was writing the details of the incidents which were taking place at the rectory) to Samuel, some very interesting side lights on the mystery, but there was yet no solution to it. She said:

> On the 1st of December our maid heard, at the door of the dining -room, several dismal groans, like a person in extremes at the point of death. We gave little heed to her relation, and endeavored to laugh her out of her fears. Some nights (two or three) after, several of the family heard a strange knocking in divers plaes, usually three or four knocks at the same time, and then staying a little. This continued every night for a fortnight; sometimes it was in the garret, but most commonly in the nursery or green chamber. We all heard it but your father; and I was not willing he should be informed of it, lest he should fancy it was against his own death, which, indeed, we all apprehended. But when it began to be so troublesome, both night and day, that few or none of the family durst be alone, I resolved to tell him of it, being minded he should speak to it. At first he would not believe but somebody did it to alarm us; but the night after, as soon as he was in bed, it knocked loudly nine times, just by his bedside. He rose, and went to see if he could find out what it was, but could see nothing. Afterwards he heard it as the rest.
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> One night it made such a noise in the room over our heads, as if several people were walking, then ran up and down the stairs, and was so outrageous that we thought the children would be frightened; so your father and I

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*Clarke, E. p. 155

rose and went down in the dark to light a candle. Just as we came to the bottom of the broad stairs, having hold of each other, on my side there seemed as if somebody had emptied a bag of money at my feet; and on his, as if all the bottles under the stairs (which were many) had been dashed in a thousands pieces. We passed through the hall into the kitchen and got a candle, and went to see the children, whom we found asleep.

The next night your father would get Mr. Hoole to lie at our house, and we all sat together till one or two o'clock in the morning, and heard the knocking as usual. Sometimes it would make a noise like the winding up of a jack, at other times, as that night Mr. Hoole was with us, like a carpenter planing deals; but most commonly it knocked thrice and stopped, and then thrice again, and so, many hours together. We persuaded your father to speak, and try if any voice would be heard. One night, about six o'clock, he went into the nursery in the dark, and at first heard several deep groans, then knocking. He adjured it to speak, if it had power, and tell him why it troubled his hours; but no voice was heard, but it knocked thrice aloud. Then he questioned it if it were Sammy, and bid it, if it were, and could not speak, knock again; but it knocked no more that night, which made us hope it was not against your death.

Thus it continued till the 28th of December, when it loudly knocked (as your father used to do at the gate) in the nursery and departed. We have various conjectures what this may mean. For my own part, I fear nothing now you are safe at London hitherto, and I hope God will still preserve you; though sometimes I am inclined to think my brother is dead. Let me know your thoughts on it.

Susanna Wesley*

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*Clarke, E. p. 148-51

The mystery of these noises has been discussed by many writers and each one has given them a different interpretation, however, it is quite evident that they had an influence over John that he did not forget for a long time. John himself gives us an account of the entire incident as it was related to him. He says that these noises usually began with a loud whistling of the wind around the house and, before it came directly into the room, the latches were lifted up, and the windows were made to clatter. If there were persons in the room and they were making any noises, "Old Jeffry", as the spook came to be called by the children, would make louder noises and much more mournful, and these were always heard above the other noises. Another thing about the spook that worried the family quite a bit was that every time that Mr. Wesley offered a prayer for the King, "Old Jeffry" gave thundering knocks just when the Amen was said:

> This day (January 24), at morning prayer, the family heard the usual knocks at the prayer for the King. At night they were more distinct, both in the prayer for the Kind and that for the Prince; and one very loud one at the Amen was heard by my wife and most of my children, at the inside of my bed,*

writes Mr. Wesley in a ltter to John.

We are also told that on several occasions, when the uninvited guest behaved himself in this manner, the rector

*Whitehead, J. p. 218

became indignant and angry at his defiance, and to appease his own wrath, repeated the prayer for the King and Prince.

Here is a small record of the actions of the ghost during prayers:

> When we were at prayers, and came to the prayers for the King and the Prince, it would make a great noise over our heads constantly, whence some of the family called it a Jacobite. I have been thrice pushed by an invisible power, once against the corner of my desk in the study, a second time against the door of the matted chamber, and a third time against the right side of the frame of my study door, as I was going in.

All of these mysterious things were of great interest to John. In fact, they had such a tremendous influence over him that we even find him discussing the matter at school among his friends there.

The mysterious noises at the Epworth rectory continued to have an influence over John and in a letter which he writes to his mother on November 1, 1724, he relates a story which shows very distinctly the teachings of Mrs. Wesley in regard to incidents where people are forewarned of some dangers that are to come into their lives. There is no doubt but that John interpreted this incident in Oxford in the light of his mother's worries about her children at the time of the Epworth "noises".

He says:

> Three gentlemen of our College were in September last walking in the fields near

> Oxford about half an hour after six of whom the foremost was named Mr. Barnsley, who, going to cross the path, of a sudden started back and turned as white as ashes, but being asked by the others what ailed him, answered - Nothing. The other man coming up to the same place seemed presently more frightened than he, and bawled out that he saw one in white shoot across the path as swift as an arrow. Mr. Bransley, hearing that, told him he had seen it just before; and both of them describe it to have been like a man or woman in light grey, but of so thin a substance that they could plainly see through it. They had likewise another accident the same evening, though not quite so remarkable, both which made Mr. Bransley so curious as to write down the day of the month, which was the 26th of September. We thought no more of it afterwards till last week, when Bransley was informed by a letter from his father in Ireland that his mother died the 26th of September between 7 and 8 in the evening.*

In answer to this letter, John received a letter from Mrs. Wesley a few days after the writing of the above in which she tells her reaction as to the incident.

> Dear Jacky, - The story of Mr. Bransley has afforded me many curious speculations. I do not doubt the fact: but I cannot understand why these apparitions are permitted. If they were allowed to speak to us, and we had strength to bear such converse, - if they had commission to inform us of anything relating to their invisible world that would be of any use to us in this, - if they would instruct us how to avoid danger, or put us in a way of being wiser and better, there would be sense in it: but to appear for no end that we know of, unless to frighten people almost out of their wits, seems altogether unreasonable.**

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*Telford, J. p. 9
**Tyerman, L. p. 23

Mrs. Wesley seems to have been quite perplexed as to what to believe regarding these strange and mysterious incidents. She was eager to advise her son, but was not quite sure of her own belief. She could not understand the purpose and meaning of these things and yet she had a strange feeling that there was a reason for them, even though she could not understand. She would have given anything to be able to help John in this perplexing problem; she would like to have undestood all in order to explain every detail to her son, but could not. John's mind was more confused now than ever. One of Wesley's critics, Taylor, tells us that "Wesley's most prominent infirmity was his wonder-loving credulity; from the beginning to the end of his course this weakness ruled him." * It is very evident that Wesley believed in the Supernatural, for if it had not been for this firm belief, his work in this world would have been useless.

The disturbances at Epworth continued for some time, but they soon came to be considered as common occurances. Clarke says the noises were of the devil, while other commentators think they were caused by servants or neighbors. Regardless of their cause, we must recognize their influence upon John. He was intensely interested in every detail, first because of his early teachings by his mother in regard to the Supernatural, and second, because of his "wonder-loving nature".

Mrs. Wesley's letters concerning her opinions may not be

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* Tyerman, L. p. 23.

Mr. Bailey seems to have been quite optimistic as to our ability to believe primarily those sciences that operationism includes. Matter doesn't to believe them, but we are quite right of our own belief. The point has somewhere the business and engaging of those which is not and we have a science feeling that science is a method for that. Even though we could not determine, we would more prime activities to be made by-laws from the bare-bones meaning methods: who would like to have mathematics all in one to explicate every notion, so far as, has could not. Don't mind the more scientist and that fact. The of Bailey's conclusion failure, while we have "theory" that experiment activity was a method-leaning principle; that the principles in the use of is course that methods being and." It is to view activity that Bailey believed in the experiment. For it is not all that for this belief, its work is more well with the two scientist.

The disagreement of Dewey's scientists for our view, the that some ways to be considered as means necessary. Dewey also the belief that of the best, while other commentators that they were caused in science as methods. Concerning of this issue, we must remember that Dewey's science was the intuitively satisfied in many ways. Like because of his early indifference to the belief in regard to the instrumental and means, consider of his "method-leaning nature".

Mr. Bailey's fifteen conclusions the children may not be

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* Dewey I. c. 23.

very clear, but we do know that she was a strong believer in some phases of mysticism, that is, she believed in a forewarning by spirits of things that were to take place, especially regarding death or some tragedy. She believed in the communion of the saints with God, both now and hereafter, and in a spiritual existence after death.

The disturbances at Epworth deepened John's convictions of the existence of an unseen world and the power of Satan, a belief that played a very important part in his future life. The impressions which these occurances made upon John were of utmost consequence in molding his character, and making him one of the most earnest preachers against the powers of Satan and for the spiritual and Supernatural creeds of Christianity.

While in Osford, John distinguished himself as a scholar under the tutelage of Mr. Wigan who was eminent because of his classical knowledge. The study of the classics was John's favorite subject, and consequently he excelled in this field. But, he was not only interested in classics, but also in Logic and Oriental Languages. John was a very well rounded student for, in addition to his literary abilities, he was gifted with a natural gayety and a turn for wit an humor which was unique. He has been described as

> a fellow of the finest classical taste, of the most liberal and manly sentiments. His perfect knowledge of the classics gave a polish to his wit and an air of superior elegance to all his compositions. *

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* Whitehead, J. p. 219

Even when in financial difficulties, John was able to see the humorous side of life. Like most students who are working their way through school, John also had his financial problems. In a letter which Mrs. Wesley writes to John on August 19, 1724 she expresses her concern about paying back the money which John had borrowed. It had evidently been some time since John had written home about his financial standing and, consequently, Mrs. Wesley was very concerned about him. In this respect, John was somewhat like his father at this time of his life. It seems that his financial obligations were not very well impressed upon his mind. He was more interested in his studies and other things than he was particularly about his debts.

John, however, was not so wrapped up in his studies that he could not see the humorous side of life. His mother had been wanting him to cut his hair for some time, but John did not quite see how he could afford a hair cut every time he might need one, if he were going to make a decent appearance at school. It was for this reason that he let his hair grow. Because of his long hair he was reminded to mention to his mother in one of his letters the incedent about the rogues about Oxford. He says:

> Standing at a coffee-house door about seven in the evening, one gentleman had no sooner turned about when his cap and wig were snatched off, which he could not recover, though he pursued the tief in a great way.

[illegible] Theory of Differentiation [illegible] the [illegible] of one [illegible] possible in life. [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

> However, I am safe from such gentlemen, for unless they carried me away, carcass and all, they would have but poor "purchase".*

The moral of his story was that if that gentleman had worn his hair long, he would not have needed a wig and would have had no trouble with those rogues.

White John was a student in Oxford, he became interested in writing verse. Very little of what he wrote was original, but he delighted in writing imitative verse and in translating poetry from the Latin into English verse. One of his poems of this period of his life was an imitation of the 65th Psalm. He sent this to his father and he was greatly impressed by his ability along this line. Naturally, Mr. Wesley was anxious that John follow in his footsteps and wrote to him encouraging him to continue in this work and not to bury his talent.

His older brother, Samuel, was also quite interested in his poetic ability and wrote to him asking him to send him some of his poems. At this time, Samuel was laid up because of a fractured leg and was unable to carry on his work in Westminster for some time. John writes:

> I believe I need not use many arguments to show I am sorry for your misfortune, though at the same time I am glad, you are in a fair way of recovery. If I had heard of it from any one else, I might probably

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*Telford, J. p. 9

> have pleased you with some impertinent consolations; but the way of your relating it is a sufficient proof, that they are what you don't stand in need of. . . .*

In the same letter John speaks of his desire to see his dear mother and wants Samuel to give him all the information he can as to her visit to Westminster. He continues:

> The two things which I most wished for of almost anything in the world, were to see my mother, and Westminster once again, and to see them both together was so far above my expectations, that I almost looked upon it as next to an impossibility. I have been so frequently disappointed when I had set my heart on any pleasure, that I will never again depend on any before it comes. However, I shall be obliged to you if you will tell me, as near as you can, how soon my uncle is expected in England, and my mother in London.**

One of the poems which John sent to Samuel on this occasion was a translation from the Latin:

> As o'er fair Cloe's rosy cheek
> Careless a little vagrant pass'd,
> With artful hand around his neck
> A slender chain the virgin cast.
>
> As Juno near her throne above,
> Her spangled bird delights to see;
> As Venus has her fav'rite dove,
> Cloe shall have her fav'rite flea.
>
> Pleas'd at his chains, with nimble steps
> He o'er her snowy bosom stray'd:
> Now on her panting breast he leaps,
> Now hides between his little head.
>
> Leaving at length his old abode,
> He found, by thirst or fortune led,
> Her swelling lips that brighter glow'd
> Than roses in their native bed.

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*Whitehead, J. p. 219
**Ibid.

Cloe, your artful bands undo,
   Nor for your captive's safety fear;
No artful bands are needful now
   To keep the willing vagrand here.

Whi'st on that heav'n 'tis giv'n to stay,
   (Who would not wish to be so blest,)
No force can draw him once away,
   Till death shall seize his desin'd breast.*

At this period in life, John was beginning to express some of those ideas which he had obtained from the reading of the classics, but it was not long after this that he began to look upon a more serious aspect in his life, - that was - he began to consider seriously entering into deacon's orders. This led him to much deeper thinking and much more careful consideration of the every-day problems of life. These new ideas, however, did not separate him further from his mother; instead, they drew him closer to her because, now more than ever, John sought her help and advice as to the steps and the courses he should take up for this new work.

We have to recognize the great debt that John owed to his mother for her inestimable help in his spiritual and intelectual problems. John's spiritual welfare was Mrs. Wesley's chief concern, and it was to this end that she was always striving. Her letters were full of advice and consultation with her sons. She never felt that she was discharged from the duty of caring for her children and it was especially so in

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* Whitehead, J. p. 219

the life of John and her concern for him. She felt particularly responsible for him, and he was always careful to tell her his problems and go to her for advice in every situation of life.

It was at this time at the University that John was being confronted with some very difficult problems for which he did not feel himself properly fitted to face. He consulted his mother on the question for he felt that she knew better how to advise him. He had confidence in her judgment and, when he wrote to her about the matter, he told her his opinions and reasons on the matter and then asks for her advice.

> I was lately advised to read Thomas à Kempis over, which I have frequently seen, but never much looked into before. I think he must have been a person of great piety and devotion, but it is my misfortune to differ from him in some of his main points. I can't think that when God sent us into the world He had irreversibly decreed that we should be perpetually miserable in it. If it be so, the very endeavour after happiness in this life is a sin; as it is acting in direct contradiction to the very design of our creation. What are become of all the innocent comforts and pleasures of life, if it is the intent of our CREATOR that we should never taste them? If our taking up the Cross implies our bidding adieu to all joy and satisfaction, how is it reconcilable with what Solomon so expressly affirms of religion--that her ways are ways of pleasantness and all her paths peace? A fair patrimony indeed, which Adam has left his sons, if they are destined to be continually wretched! And though heaven is undoubtedly a sufficient recompense for all the afflictions we may or can suffer here, yet I am afraid that argument

> would make few converts to Christianity if the yoke were not easy even in this life, and such an one as gives rest, at least as much as trouble.
>
> Another of his tenets, which is indeed a natural consequence of this, is that all mirth is vain and useless, if not sinful. But why, then, does the Psalmist so often exhort us to rejoice in the Lord and tell us that it becomes the just to be joyful? I think one could hardly desire a more express text than that in the 68th Psalm, "Let the righteous rejoice and be glad in the Lord. Let them also be merry and joyful!" And he seems to carry the matter as much too far on the other side afterwards where he asserts that nothing is an affliction to a good man, and that he ought to thank God even for sending him misery. This, in my opinion, is contrary to God's design in afflicting us; for though He chasteneth those whom He loveth, yet it is in order to humble them: and surely the method Job took in his adversity was very different from this, and yet in all that, he sinned not. I hope that when you are at leisure you will give me your thoughts on that subject, and set me right if I am mistaken. *

In accordance to John's request, Mrs. Wesley answered his letter on January 8, 1725 in which she presents her views on the subject.

> I cannot recollect the passages you mention: but believing you do the Author, I positively aver that he is extremely in the wrong in that impious, not to say blasphemous, assertion, that God by and irresistible Decree hath determined any man to be miserable, even in this life. His intentions, as Himself, are holy, and just and good; and all the miseries incident to man here or hereafter spring from themselves. The case stands thus: This life

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* Telford, J. Vol. 1 p. 15-17

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

> is a state of probation, wherein eternal happiness or misery are proposed to our choice; the one as the reward of a virtuous, the other as a consequence of a vicious life. Man is a compound being, a strange mixture of spirit and matter; or rather a Creature, wherein those opposite principles are united without mixture, yet each principle, after an incomprehensible manner, subject to the influence of the other. The true happiness of man, under this consideration, consists in a due subordination of the inferior to the superior powers; of the animal to the rational nature; and both to GOD.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> I take Kempis to have been an honest weak, man, who had more zeal than knowledge, by his condemning all mirth or pleasure as sinful or useless, in opposition to so many direct and plain texts of Scripture. Would you judge the lawfulness or unlawfulness of pleasure; of the innocence or malignity of actions? Take this rule, whatever weakens your reason, impairs the tenderness of your conscience, obscures your sense of God, or takes off the relish of spiritual things: in short, whatever increases the strength and authority of your body over your mind, that thing is sin to you, however innocent it may be in itself. And so on the contrary . . . .*

Here Mrs. Wesley's arguments and careful explanations certainly show her capability to understand the greater and deeper problems which were confronting her son at this time. Mrs. Wesley realized that she had no power in herself to explain these most puzzling problems and yet they were essential in the formation of the correct concept of God and His relations with his children on earth. It was only through the

*Clarke, A. p. 267-69

help, and the grace, and the Spirit of Christ that she was able to explain these things to her son. Her letter, of course, did not settle all the problems, and it was only a few days after John received this letter from his mother that he was again seeking her help in the formation of his opinions on other important problems.

He writes the following:

> You have so well satisfied me as to the tenets of à Kempis, that I venture to trouble you once more on a more dubious occasion.
>
> I have heard one I take to be a person of good judgment say that she would advise no one very young to read Dr. Taylor's "On Living and Dying": She added that he almost put her out of her senses when she was 15 or 16 years old; because he seemed to exclude all from being in a way of salvation who did not come up to his rules, some of which are altogether impracticable. A fear of being tedious will make me confine myself to one or two instances, in which I am doubtful, though several others might be produced of almost equal consequence.
>
> In his fourth section of the second chapter, where he treats of Humility, these, among others, he makes necessary parts of that virtue:
>
> Love to be little esteemed, and be content to be slighted or undervalued.
>
> Take no content in praise when it is offered thee.
>
> Please not thyself when disgraced by supposing thou didst deserve praise though they understood thee not or enviously detracted from thee.

> We must be sure in some sense or other to think ourselves the worst in every company where we come.
>
> Give God thanks for every weakness, deformity, or imperfection, and accept it as a favour and grace, and instrument to resist pride.*

In answer to these questions on Humility, Mrs. Wesley writes:

> Weakness, deformity, or imperfection of body are not evil in themselves, but accidentally become good or evil according as they effect us and make us good or bad.

Another problem that bothers John in Mr. Taylor's book is the question of Repentance:

> "In the 9th section of the 4th chapter, he says": John continues, "Repentance contains in it all the parts of an holy life from our to our death.
>
> A man can have but one proper repentance--viz. when the rite of baptism is verified by God's grace coming upon us and our obedience. After this change, if we ever fall into the contrary state there is no place left for any more repentance.
>
> A true penitent must all the days of his life pray for pardon and never think the work complete until he dies. Whether God has forgiven us or no, we know not, therefore still be sorrowful for ever having sinned.
>
> I take the more notice of this last sentence, because it seems to contradict his own words in the next section, where he says that by the Lord's Supper all the members are united to one another and to Christ the Head.

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*Tyerman, L. p. 37

> The Holy Ghost confers on us the Graces we pray for, and our souls receive unto them seeds of an immortal nature. Now, surely these graces are not of so little force, as that we can't perceive whether we have them or no; and if we dwell in Christ, and Christ in us, which, He will not do until we are regenerate, certainly we must be sensible of it. If his opinions be true, I must own I have always been in great error; for I imagined that when I communicated worthily, i. e. with faith, humility and thankfulness, my preceeding sins were ipso facto forgiven me. I mean, so forgiven, that, unless I fell into them again, I might be secure of their ever rising in judgment against me in the other world. But if we can never have any certainty of our being in a state of salvation, good reason it is that every moment should be spent not in joy but fear and trembling; and then undoubtedly in this life WE ARE of all men most miserable!
>
> God deliver us from such an expectation as this! Humility is undoubtedly necessary to Salvation; and if all these things are essential to humility, who can be humble, who can be saved?*

In this same connection, John writes another letter to his mother concerning Predestination.

> What, then, shall I say of Predestination? An everlasting purpose of God to deliver some from damnation does, I suppose, exclude all from that deliverance who are not chosen. And if it was inevitably decreed, from eternity, that such a determinate part of mankind should be saved, and none beside them, a vast majority of the world were only born to eternal death, without so much as a possibility of avoiding it. How is this consistent with either the Divine Justice of Mercy? Is it

*Telford, J. Vol. 1, p. 18

> merciful to ordain a creature to everlasting misery? Is it just to punish man for crimes which he could not but commit? How is man, if necessarily determined to one way of acting, a free agent? To lie under either a physical or a mortal necessity is entirely repugnant to human liberty. But that God should be the Author of sin and injustice (which must, I think, be consequence of maintaining this opinion) is a contradiction to the clearest ideas we have of the divine nature and perfection.
>
> Faith must necessarily at length be resolved into reason. God is true: therefore what He says is true.
>
> When any one can bring me more reasonable propositions than these, I am ready to assent to them: till then, it will be highly unreasonable to change my opinion.
>
> I used to think that the difficulty of Predestination might be solved by supposing that it was indeed decreed from eternity that a remnant should be elect, but that it was in every man's power to be of that remnant. But the words of our Article will not bear that sense. I see no other way but to allow that some may be saved who where not always of the number of the elected. Your sentiments on this point, especially where I am in an error, will much oblige and I hope improve
>
> Your dutiful son*

In response to this letter, Mrs. Wesley wrote to John on July 18, 1725, a long letter in which she put forth her beliefs in regard to Predestination:

> . . . I have often wondered that men should be so vain to amuse themselves by searching into the decrees of God, which no human wit can fathom; and do not rather

*Telford, J. Vol. 1, p. 21

> employ their time and powers in working out their salvation, and making their own calling and election sure. Such studies tend more to confound than inform the understanding; and young people had best let them alone. But since I find you have some scruples concerning our article of Predestination, I will tell you my thoughts of the matter; and if they sattisfy not, you may desire your father's direction, who is surely better qualified for a casuist than me.
>
> The doctrine of Predestination, as maintained by rigid Calvinists, is very shocking; and ought utterly to be abhorred, because it charges the most Holy God with being the Author of sin. I think you reason very well against it; for it is certainly inconsistent with the justice and goodness of God to lay any man under either a physical or moral necessity of committing sin, and then punish him for doing it. - Far be this from the Lord! - Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do right?
>
> I do firmly believe that God from all eternity, hath elected some to everlasting life; but then I humbly conceive, that this election is founded in his foreknowledge, according to that in the eighth of Romans, Vers. 29, 30. "Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate....."*

It was hard for John to be reconciled to the arguments of Predestination and during the first ten years of his ministry he was very strong against this dogma. However, thirty years later he renounced openly his anti-Calvinistic views and said they were "mere bigotry". He said he could not reconcile his early position with his mature theology of experience and so abandoned it. His first reaction shows distinctly his mother's teachings, but his mature judgment was contrary to this.

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* Clarke, A. p. 271, 272.

Wesley was elected Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford, on March 17, 1726 and became lecturer in Logic there that same year. His letters are certainly wonderful examples of his fitness to the position.

John Wesley had already been ordained deacon by the learned Bishop Potter who was well esteemed by a great portion of his contemporaries. He was a High-Churchman who maintained that episcopacy was of Divine institution, but, in spite of his beliefs, he had a friendly feeling toward the Methodists. John's ordination took place on September 19, 1725.

John had written to his father concerning his desire to take orders and the opinions at home as to the course of study that John should follow were considerably different. Mrs. Wesley wanted him to devote the greater part of his time to the study of practical divinity, while his father was anxious that he engage his time in critical learning. Mrs. Wesley's influence in this matter seems to have been the one which John followed, although he did devote some of his time to the study of critical learning. Mr. Wesley was considerably opposed to John's entering into the ministry, but a few weeks after his first decision, he considered the matter more carefully and advised John to pray and study in reference to such a step because he wanted him to be sure of himself before doing this.

Another letter which contains a bit of very interesting advice which Mrs. Wesley wrote to John at this same time--when

he was searching for truth and trying to formulate his opinions regarding those authors which I have already discussed above and some other problems of divinity--is one recorded by both Adam and Eliza Clarke.

> The difficulty there is in separating the ideas of things that nearly resemble each other, and whose properties and effects are much the same, has, I believe, induced some to think that the human soul has no passion but Love; and that all those passions of affections which we distinguish by the names of hope, fear, joy, etc. are no more than various modes of love. This notion carries some show of reason, though I can't acquiesce in it. I must confess I never yet met with such an accurate definition of the passion of Love, as fully satisfied me. It is indeed commonly defined a desire of union with a known or apprehended good, but this directly makes love and desire the same thing. . . .
>
> What then is love? or how shall we describe its strange mysterious essence? It is--I do not know what! A powerful something! source of our joy and grief! Felt and experienced by every one, and yet unknown to all! Nor shall we ever comprehend what it is, till we are united to our first principle, and there read its wonderous nature in the clear mirror of uncreated Love! till which time it is best to rest satisfied with such apprehensions of its essence as we can collect from our observations of its effects and properties; for other knowledge of it in our present state is too high and too wonderful for us; neither can we attain unto it.
>
> Suffer now a word of advice. However curious you may be in searching unto the nature, or in distinguishing the properties, of the passions or virtues of human kind, for your own private satisfaction; be very very cautious in giving nice distinctions

> in public assemblies, for it does not answer the true end of preaching, which is to mend men's lives, and not fill their heads with with unprofitable speculations. And after all that can be said, every affection of the soul is better known by experience than any description that can be given of it.*

John certainly followed his mother's advice in this respect, for his sermons and the results brought about by his work are concrete examples of his interest in the salvation of souls from sin and eternal death. They were not full of theoretical subjects which could very easily lead to speculations that were of little service to humanity.

The following summer, after John was ellected Fellow at Lincoln College, his parents invited him home for a visit. John obtained leave of absence from the College and spent the summer with his parents in Epworth and Wroot. While at hime, he assisted his father in the reading of prayers each Sunday and in the preaching at both curates. His visit at home this summer was one of great joy to him as well as to his parents, for it had been almost thirteen years since John had been in the home for any length of time. The summer was not by any means one for rest and recreation for the young student. John was too energetic to waste his time and consequently he took advantage of it to pursue his studies with much diligence. He conversed with his mother and father on many topics of

*Clarke, A. p. 274, Clarke, E. p. 197

practical religion in which they were prepared to help their son. It was during this time that he wrote the paraphrase on the 104th Psalm in which he displays his genius and poetic ability. This work of art was admired very much by many of his critics, and Mrs. Wesley was well pleased with his work, but was ready to advise her son at this time lest he should become too wrapped up in poetry and to this she says,

> I would not have you leave off making verses; rather make poetry sometimes your diversion, though never your business.*

It was then also that John translated his father's poem entitled "Job". John followed his mother's advice and wrote very little poetry, although he had wonderful ability as a poet. Even though the majority of his verses or poems were translations, we must take into consideration that the words used in them were Wesley's and it was through those words that he was able to make live in his own language verses that otherwise would have never been made known to us.

The conversations that John had opportunity to have with his mother especially, on many different occasions during this summer, were indeed a source of great inspiration and help to him in later years. John records in his diary some of their topics of conversation, "how to increase our faith, our hope, and our love of God: prudence, simplicity, sincerity, pride, vanity, wit, humor, fancy, courtesy, and general usefulness."**

*Telford, J. p. 30, Tyerman, L. p. 47
**Whitehead, J. p. 231

John returned to Oxford on September 21 to continue his work, and in November he was elected Greek lecturer and moderator of the classes there at the College. This was quite an honor for a student who had not as yet been promoted to the degree of Master of Arts, but the administration of the College recognized his ability and felt that he was capable of doing this work.

At the beginning of the following year (1727) John became more and more aware of the fact that it was easy to waste much valuable time searching for knowledge that really was of no particular benefit to him. He also felt that while at Christ Church College, he had misspent many useful hours that could have been of much benefit to him, but he had idled them away in much useless conversation. Upon his arrival at Lincoln College, he decided to make a radical change. He writes to his mother on the subjects and tells her about his new plans,

> I am perfectly come over to your opinion, that there are many truths it is not worth while to know. If we had a dozen centuries to live, we might, perhaps, be pardoned for spending a little time upon such curious trifles, but, with the small pittance of life we have, it would be great ill husbandry to spend a considerable part of it in what makes neither a quick nor a sure return.*

His own testimony also reveals how he felt that he had been removed from Christ Church to Lincoln by divine providence

*Tyerman, pp. 48, 54

in order for him to reform in his daily practices of entertaining friends, etc. He knew that he would have many callers, whether they were friends or only curiosity seekers, who would come to him and cause him to lose much time. He says,

> I resolved to have no acquaintance by chance, but by choice; and to choose such only as would help me on my way to heaven. In consequence to this, I narrowly observed the temper and behaviour of all that visited me. *

John had a very special gift of frankness, and when those visitors did not appeal to him because of their religious insufficiency, he was careful to decline their invitations to visit with them and also would not ask them back to visit him. In this manner he was able to rid himself of such students as were always robbing others of their time.

He made a regular schedule for his studies which he adhered to strictly. He had been used to the methodical devotional practices of his mother in which we are told that she meditated on numerous religious problems and took each of her children individually to the throne of grace committing each of them to Almighty God. John had evidently been impressed by the way that his mother was able to arrange her work in such a way that she could have at least from two to three hours each day for these daily devotions. She would not permit any-

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* Tyerman, p. 48

thing whatsoever to interfere with her hour of devotion, for she said,

> Whenever company or business inclines you to quit your retirement (into your devotions), and either to emit or cursorily perform accustomed exercises; and you, instead of resisting comply with such inclinations, you may observe that you are always guilty of some sin or error, that upon reflection gives you more pain than the profit or pleasure gave satisfaction. Therefore, make it your care to conquer your inclination to any company at such times: nor let any trivial business divert you; for no business, unless it cannot be laid aside or suspended, without sin, can be of equal, much less greater, importance, than caring for the soul.*

In order to find time for his devotions and all the many other duties that were his, he resolved to rise one hour earlier every morning and retire one hour later in the evening. His schedule each day was arranged so that certain hours of the morning and afternoon were devoted to certain studies. For instance: on Mondays and Tuesdays, he devoted his time to Greek and Roman classics, historians and poets. On Wednesday he studied logic and ethics. On Thursday he studied Hebrew and Arabic; Friday, he studied metaphysics and natural philosophy; Saturday, oratory and poetry, and on Sunday he devoted his time to the study of Divinity. During the hours in which these more fixed studies were not listed, he perfected himself in the French language and also read many modern

*Clarke, A. p. 317

authors on subjects that drew his attention.*

John took his degree of Master of Arts, on February 14, 1727, and shortly after this, he writes to his mother after having been given considerable praise because of his disputation for the degree.

> One advantage at least, my degree has given me; I am now at liberty, and shall be in a great measure for some time, to choose my own employment. And as I believe I know my own deficiencies best, and which of them are most necessary to be supplied; I hope my time will turn to somewhat better account, than when it was not so much in my own disposal.

Wesley confessed that he was not positive of the way in which he could obtain a more practical knowledge of God and could better conform to His will for him. He realized his deficiency at this point and was willing to search for the way of righteousness and of peace which he had not yet fully been convinced that he had found. Soon after he was graduated, John was offered several positions to teach, but he considered them quite lightly, perhaps because he had heard that the places were not very desirable and had many disadvantages. Instead of taking a teaching position, he accepted for a short while the job of helping his father in the curcies of Wroot and of Epworth. Mr. Wesley's health was failing fast and he was very anxious that one of his sons assist him in his work

*Whitehead, J. p. 234

there. He accepted his father's offer and left Oxford, stopping in London to see his brother Samuel. Then he went to Wroot, where he remained for some time as curate for his father. He was then called back to Oxford to assist there in the preservance of the discipline and good government of the College. John had visited Oxford a few months earlier and had seen how his younger brother Charles together with some other young men, had organized a little society, chiefly for the purpose of assisting each other in their studies, and to consult with one another which were the best methods of employing their time to best advantage. They met regularly, and while John was there, he met with them, and when he returned permanently he became the principal leader of the group. This little group was later called "The Holy Club".

John did not quit the pastorate of the little church of Wroot because of his literary ambitions nor because he was dissatisfied with the little charge. He did it because he was called by the heads of his college and he felt that he was needed at that particular time more in Oxford than in Wroot. He became a tutor in the College, had charge of discipline of the hall and also took upon himself the direction of a religious society. John was greatly liked by the students in spite of the fact that he was a little fanatical at times, in their estimations, for he felt that he was responsible for

their spiritual welfare as well as their scholastic advancement. Therefore, he did not let the opportunity pass without trying to make them both scholars and Christians.

The knowledge and literary training that John received during his educational carear was great, but it was not enough to meet his own spiritual need. He had become convinced at a much earlier period in life (1725) that his own endeavors were insufficient to give him the mind of Christ. He understood clearly that the Gospel was intended to be "the means of reconciling him to God, and giving him a title to the heavenly inheritance; of cleansing him from sin, and preparing him for the enjoyment of Heaven", but he could not see how this was to be done. His idea of Justification and of Sanctification had become confused because of his early training at this point. This confused state opened his mind to other problems and it was not long before he found himself more confused than ever. He wrote to his mother for help, but she could not lend him much help at this point because it was her theology here that had been the cause of his trouble.

Mrs. Wesley believed that the terms Justification and Sactification were identical, that is, they meant one work of grace, and therefore, took place at the same time. John became much confused because of this teaching and began to study the problem for himself. While studying the Scriptures he discovered that these were intended to be two definite works

works of grace. After becoming thoroughly convinced that he was right, John began to preach the doctrines of Justification and Sanctification as two definite works of grace and continued to do so until his death. This was the only point of significance in which John differed with his mother's beliefs.

In a letter written on Feb. 28, 1730 John accounts the following to his mother, after reading Bishop Taylor's Book,

> Two things in Bishop Taylor I have often been thinking of since I wrote last; one of which I like exceedingly, and the other not. That I dislike, is his account of Hope, of which he speaks thus: "Faith believes the revelations, Hope expects His promises; Faith gives our understanding to God, Hope our passions and affections; Faith is opposed to infidelity, Hope to despair....."
>
> Therefore, he says,
> If God be true, and I am sincere, then I am to hope.
> But God is true, and I am sincere (there is th e pinch): Therefore I am to hope.
>
> What I so much like is his account of the pardon of sins, which is the clearest I ever met with. Pardon of sin in the gospel is Sanctification. Christ came to take away our sins, by turning every one of us from our iniquities - (Acts 3:26) and there is not in the nature of the thing any expectation of pardon, or sign of significance of it, but so far as the thing itself discovers itself. As we hate sin, grow in grace, and arrive at the state of holiness, which is also a state of repentance and imperfection but yet of sincerity of heart and diligent endeavour; in the same degree we are to judge concerning the forgiveness of sins.*

John is still not sure of himself and therefore, asks for his mother's help here.

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* Telford, J. Vol. 1. p. 33

Another thing that caused John considerable trouble was the question of the Sacraments. He counseled with his mother on the subject in a letter of Feb. 28, 1732.

> One consideration is enough to make me assent to his (Mr. Wesley's) and your judgment concerning the Holy Sacraments; which is, that you can allow Christ's human nature to be present in it, without allowing either Con- or Trans-substantiation. But that His divinity is so united to us then, as He never is but to worthy receivers, I firmly believe, though the manner of that union is utterly a mystery to me.
>
> That none but worthy receivers whould find this effect is not strange to me, when I observe how small effect many of the improvements have upon the unprepared mind.*

There is no doubt, from what follows in this letter that Mrs. Wesley had written to the boys advising them and explaining to them the meaning of the Sacraments, that Charles and his friends had accepted her explanation, but John did not consider himself prepared for this. He says:

> Though my understanding approved what was excellent, yet my heart did not feel it.**

It was about this same time that father Wesley became ill and now, more than ever, he wanté one of his sons to come to the rescue of the family and supply both curates, the one at Epworth and the one at Wroot. Mr. Wesley was now over sixty five years of age and realized that this was probably a fatal

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* Telford, J. Vol 1. P. 56.
** Ibid

illness. He wrote first to Samuel, who being the oldest son, was more likely to be more responsible for the family than the other two boys. However, Samuel declined the offer and when it was offered to John and John also declined it, Samuel protested against the decision of the younger brother and wrote to him urging him that he should reconsider the offer. Samuel was very emphatic in his opinion on the matter and even went so far as to say that the reason that John had declined was because of "self love instead of love for his neighbour and the cure of souls." The correspondence that passed among the members of the family on the subject extend over a period of an entire year. Mr. Wesley realized that for the good of the family, it would be much better if one of the sons accepted the living of these two cures and thus followed in their father's footsteps, but the arguments made by John against the acceptance of such an offer were indeed many. Samuel tried to refute each argument, but John was too much of a debater to let his brother argue him into the acceptance of this offer, if he had once made up his mind against it. Mrs. Wesley would have liked also to see her son John accept the offer and continue his father's work, but she was not going to urge him against his will to accept it. His argument for remaining in Oxford, as he presented it to his father, was this:

> The question is not whether I could do more good to others there or here; but whether I could do more good to myself: seeing

> whether I could be most holy myself, there I can most promote holiness in others. But I can improve myself more at Oxford than at any other place.*

And to this his father replied that our main consideration in choosing a course of life "is not dear self, but the glory of God, and the different degrees of promoting it."**

Other arguments, pro and con, were presented by the father and the sons concerning the living at Epworth and Wroot, but John remained in Oxford and his father passed away the following year.

It seems that the letter in which Samuel told John that he should undertake "the cure of souls" had a somewhat haunting effect upon John. It was perhaps this note that awoke in him the realization of this need, and even though he did not accept the living at Epworth and Wroot, it is very probable that this was the chief reason for his trip to Georgia.

No doubt the arguments presented by Samuel with regard to the Epworth living had some effect on John because he did finally apply for the living there a very short while before his father's death, but he applied too late. Complications arose that prevented those who were able to help Wesley obtain the living there, and it was impossible to put the matter through. But perhaps this was all for the best, because this

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* Tyerman, L. p. 96
**Ibid.

gave Wesley freedom to exercise his own will in the question of the trip to Georgia.

After the father's death, the home was broken up. Samuel took Kezia with him to London and Mrs. Wesley was given a home with her daughter Emilia, in Gainsborough. This was a wonderful arrangement for Mrs. Wesley because she and Emilia had been very close for many years and no doubt Emilia was able to lend her the support and confort that she so greately needed at this time.

John felt in a special way his responsibility to care for his aged and infirm mother and wanted to do all that was in his power to bring her confort during her last years. However, it was at this time also that new recruits for the Colony of Georgia were being sought. General Oglethorpe, who was a personal friend of the Rector of Epworth, and also was personally acquainted with Samuel, had made an offer to the two younger boys, John and Charles, and was trying to persuade them to go to Georgia.

John had been offered the job of going as chaplain and missionary to the natives, and Charles was to go as secretary to John. This offer did not appeal to the young men at first and they turned it down emphatically. Oglethorpe, however, was insistent, but John made one excuse after another said he felt the responsibility of the care of his mother at that

time and he could not go because of this. However, Oglethorpe was very anxious that he go and asked him if he would go if his mother would consent. Wesley resolved to accept his mother's decision as final in the matter, accepting it as "the voice of Providence". After he had told her the story and asked her to voice her opinion on the matter, her reply was:

> Has I twenty sons, I should rejoice that they were all so employed, though I should never see them more.*

This was enough proof for Wesley that the plan for him was to accept the offer and, consequently, he and Charles sailed for Georgia about six months after the Home in Epworth had been broken up.

CHAPTER V

Beginning of Active Ministry

We have very little of the correspondence that passed between John and his mother after the death of his father. However, the little we have is filled with helpful advice and information on religious subjects that was of tremendous help to him through life. Mrs. Wesley did not feel that her task was over when her sons went out into the active work, but rather, she felt more than ever her responsibility and her letters were always welcome by the boys.

Some of the profound thought that characterised many of the letters written by Mrs. Wesley was illustrated by one she wrote while staying at the home of her daughter Emilia:

> God is Being itself, the I AM, and therefore must necessarily be the Supreme Good! He is so infinitely blessed, that every perception of His blissful presence imparts a glad vitality to the heart. Every degree of approach toward Him, is, in the same proportion, a degree of happiness; and I often think that were He always present to our mind, as we are present to Him, there would be no pain nor sense of misery. I have long since chose Him for my only Good, my All, my pleasure, my happiness, in this world as well as in the world to come. And although I have not been so faithful to His grace as I ought to have been, yet I feel my spirit adheres to its Choice, and aims daily at cleaving

> steadfastly unto God. Yet one thing often troubles me: that notwithstanding I know that while we are present with the body we are absent from the Lord, notwithstanding I have no taste, no relish left for anything the world calls pleasure, yet I do not long to go home, as in reason I ought to do. This often shocks me; and as I constantly pray (almost without ceasing) for thee, my son, so I beg you likewise to pray for me, that God would make me better, andtake me at the best.*

This letter must have been received at a very opportune time, for it was one of the first letters written to them while they were in Georgia. On the long voyage across the ocean, John and Charles, together with two other young men, friends of theirs who were also going on this same mission, were first made to realize their need of something more in their lives that would give them a definite assurance of their souls' salvation. On board the ship they had come in contact with a group of Moravian Missionaries who were also going to Georgia to evangelize the "heathen". Their concept of religion was entirely different from anything any of these four young men had ever heard, and naturally they were perplexed when they first heard their testimonies. They preached Justification by faith in the Atonement of Christ, and that alone. One of the most amazing incidents that took place while crossing was a terrific storm during which the ship was swaying

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*Clarke, E. p. 232, and Whitehead, J. p. 281

from one side to the other and the waves were beating in on deck with such speed, that the shipmen and the four young men were greatly frightened, but the Moravians were calm and peaceful, for they said they had the assurance in their hearts that God would protect them from all danger or harm, and therefore, were not afraid even of death.

John did not forget that incident. He pondered over their attitude and went to them for help, but we find him all during his stay in Georgia searching for this assurance. His reason for accepting the position in Georgia had been, not chiefly to save the Indians in Georgia, but rather the hope of saving his own soul. However, his acquaintance with these Moravian Missionaries had created a much greater conflict within him than any conflict he had experienced while in Oxford. Wesley realized that the Moravians had something which he did not have and was determined to search for that until he had found that assurance of his own salvation.

He continued in Georgia, although he felt that his work was not very successful. Mrs. Wesley's encouragement and advice meant much to John while he was there. He was full of vigor and of life and was anxious to see things accomplished, but that was too much to hope for at that time. He left Georgia feeling that his efforts had been in vain. He said:

> I went to America to convert the Indians; but oh! who shall convert me! Who, what is

> he that will deliver me from this evil heart of unbelief? I have a fair summer religion; I can talk well; nay, and believe myself, while no danger is near: but let death look me in the face, and my spirit is troubled.*

John was a victim of outspokenness. Like his father, he was quick to speak and when he spoke, he often hurt people's feelings in such a way that it caused hard feelings among his parishioners. He lived constantly in fear and was ever seeking how to attain that full assurance of his own salvation. He said:

> The faith I want is, "a sure trust and confidence in God, that through the merits of Christ my sins are forgiven, and I reconciled to the favour of God." I want that faith which St. Paul recommends to all the world, especially in his epistle to the Romans: the faith that enables everyone to cry out, "I live not; but Christ liveth in me. . ." I want the faith which none can have without knowing that he hath it.**

In search of this faith, John went to Hernhuth, Germany, where he came in touch with the leaders of the Moravian Missionaries, whom he had first come in contact with on his voyage to Georgia. He remained there for some time learning more about their doctrines and trying to find this assurance.

He returned to England with a determination to preach this doctrine of Justification by faith until he had received

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*Journals, Vol. 1, p. 74, and 77.
**Ibid.

a definite assurance in his own soul that he was saved. He began preaching, in 1738, inthe larger churches in London, but it was not long before they had all forbidden him to continue to preach. One of the reasons for this was his friendship with Mr. John Whitefield, who at that same time had begun his fervent preaching in the churches in England and had created much emotional feeling during his services. This wad done to such an extent that many unnecessary demonstrations were being seen. It was beginning to be so in some of Wesley's meetings too, and this was just a little too much for the conservative Anglicans. When the two, Wesley and Whitefield, were barred from preaching in the churches of England, they resorted to out door preaching. Wesley did not approve of this method at the beginning and neither did he aporove of such outward demonstrations as were being frequently seen in these meetings where people would drop to the floor as dead. Wesley says to this:

> I could scarce reconcile myself at first to this strange way of preaching in the fields, of which he (Mr. Whitefield) set me an example Sunday morning. Having been all my life (till very lately) so tenacious of every point relanting to decency and order, that I should have thought the saving of souls almost a sin, if it had not been done in a church.*

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*Journal, Vol. 1, p. 184

These outward demonstrations of high emotionalism as seen in the early out of door meetings of these young evangelists caused much comment on the part of the more conservative members of the Anglican church. Samuel, John's elder brother, was very much disturbed because of the new doctrines that his two brothers were preaching. He wrote to his mother to persuade her to use her influence in changing John's ideas of religion and of worship. However, instead of trying to use her influence to stop John and Charles in this, Mrs. Wesley did not feel that she was well enough prepared to take such a step and preferred to wait until she had talked with the boys personally and had their opinions. Some said they were under strong delusions and had gone to extremes in the practice of religion. Mrs. Wesley, however, was willing to recognize that the doctrines which her sons were preaching were new, but she said she had not yet conversed with them on the subject, and could not advise them until she had done so. The letters between Samuel and his mother at this time have been considerably misrepresented and for this reason I shall quote a large portion of Mrs. Wesley's letter. Her objections were chiefly because her sons had not rebuked the people for emphasizing the "dreams, visions, or some extraordinary revelation, which some persons pretended to have had in which they received

their knowledge of their justification." In connection with this she writes:

> Your two double letters came safe to me last Friday. I thank you for them, and have received much satisfaction in reading them. They are written with good spirit and judgment, sufficient, I should think, to satisfy any unprejudiced mind, that the reviving these pretensions to dreams, visions, etc. is not only vain and frivolous as to the matter of them, but also of dangerous consequence to the weaker sort of Christians. You have well observed, "that it is not the method of Providence to use extraordinary means to bring about that for which ordinary ones are sufficient." Therefore the very end for which they pretend that these new revelations are sent seems to me one of the best arguments against the truth of them. As far as I can see, they plead that these visions, etc., are given to assure some particular persons of their adoption and salvation. But this end is abundantly provided for in the Holy Scriptures, wherein all may find the rules, by which we must live here and be judged hereafter, so plainly laid down, "that he who runs may read;" and it is by these laws we should examine ourselves, which is a way of God's apoointment, and therefore we may hope for his direction and assistance in such examination. And if, upon a serious review of our state, we find that in the tenor of our lives we have or do now sincerely desire and endeavor to perform the conditions of the gospel covenant required on our parts, then we may discern that the Holy Spirit hath laid in our minds a good foundation of a strong, reasonable, and lively hope of God's mercy through Christ.
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> This is the assurance of hope," which he admonishes us to "hold fast unto the end." And the consequence of encouraging fanciful people in this new way of seeking assurance, (as all do that hear them tell their silly

> stories without rebuke) I think must be turning them out of God's way into one of their own devising. You have plainly proved that the Scripture examples, and that text in Joel, which they urge in their defense, will not answer their purpose, so that they are unsupported by any authority, human or divine, (which you have well observed;) and the credit of their relations must therefore depend on their own single affirmation, which surely will not weigh much with the sober, judicious part of mankind.
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> I began to write to Charles before I last wrote to you but could not proceed, for my chimney smoked so exceedingly that I almost lost my sight, and remained well nigh blind a considerable time. God's blessing on eye-water I make cured me of the soreness; but the weakness long remained. Since, I have been informed that Mr. Hall intends to remove his family to London, hath taken a house, and I must (if it please God I live) go with them, where I hope to see Charles; and then I can fully speak my sentiment on their new notions, more than I can do by writing; therefore I shall not finish my letter to him.*

In this letter Mrs. Wesley did not refer to the actions of her sons as "silly, or fantastic". She merely wanted her son Samuel to be merciful toward the younger boys because he did not understand the reason for their preaching these new doctrines, and she would not condemn them until she had conversed with them personally. The opinions of Samuel had been prejudiced by a letter written to him by Mrs. Hutton, at whose house John and Charles had lodged. This letter was utterly

*Clarke, Adam, p. 401

foolish and was the only fact upon which Samuel based his arguments against the doctrines his brothers were preaching. He objected to their preaching extemporaneously, and then when they were excluded from the churches in London and had to resort to out of door preaching, this was, in the eyes of Samuel, an act of schism. However, when Mrs. Wesley arrived in London and talked with the two young men and understood the real reasons for their beliefs and the doctrines they preached, she was entirely won over to their way of thinking. She was convinced that the doctrines which they preached were not only practical as far as a definite assurance of salvation was concerned, but she said it was also rational and Scriptural.

Mrs. Wesley was much better satisfied as to the course her sons had taken and to the doctrines they had begun to preach, after she had talked with them and had found them in the right way. In a letter of October, 1738, she writes the following letter in which she gives her own opinions clearly as to their new doctrines.

> It is with much pleasure I find your mind is somewhat easier than formerly, and I heartily thank God for it. The spirit of man may sustain his infirmity,--but a wounded spirit who can bear? If this hath been your case, it has been sad indeed. But blessed be God, who gave you convictions of the evil of sin, as contrary to the purity of the divine nature, and the perfect goodness of his law. Blessed be God, who showed you the necessity you were

in of a Saviour to deliver you from the power of sin and Satan, (for Christ will be no Saviour to such as see not their need of one), and directed you by faith to lay hold on that stupendous mercy offered us by redeeming love. Jesus is the only physician of souls; his blood the only salve that can heal a wounded conscience.

It is not in wealth, or honor, of sensual pleasure, to relieve a spirit heavy laden and weary if the burden of sin. These things have power to increase our guilt by alienating our hearts from God; but none to make our peace with him; to reconcile God to man, and man to God, and to renew the union between the divine and human nature.

No, there is none but Christ, none but Christ, who is sufficient for these things. But, blessed be God, he is an all-sufficient Saviour! and blessed be his holy name, that thou hast found him a Saviour to thee, my son! O let us love him much, for we have much forgiven!

I would gladly know what your notion is of justifying faith, because your speak of it as a thing your have but lately received.*

Another letter written in December of the same year gives us further light on her opinion on this subject.

I think you are fallen into an odd way of thinking, You say that till within a few months you had no spiritual life, nor any justifying faith.

Now this is as if a man should affirm he was not alive in his infancy, because, when an infant, he did not know he was alive. All, then, that I can gather from your letter is, the till a little while ago you were not so well satis-

*Clarke, A. p. 406

> fied of your being a Christian as you are now. I heartily rejoice that you have now attained to a strong and lively hope in God's mercy through Christ. Not that I can think that you were totally without saving faith before; but it is one thing to have faith, and another thing to be sensible we have it. Faith is the fruit of the Spirit, and the gift of God; but to feel or be inwardly sensible that we have true faith, required a further operation of God's Holy Spirit. You say you have peace, but not joy in believing: blessed be God for peace! May this peace rest with you! Joy will follow, perhaps not very closely, but it will follow faith and love. God's promises are sealed to us, but not dated: therefore patiently attend his pleasure; he will give you joy in believing. Amen.*

It has been made very clear to us in these letters that Mrs. Wesley did not oppose her sons' teachings. Instead, she rejoiced with them in their new Christian experience and encouraged them to continue their work. She was now staying in London and was more closely connected with the Christians who were the members of the society and thus had a better opportunity to learn of the doctrines preached by her sons. She became a faithful supporter of their work and remained so until her death. Charles was staying in Bristol, and John was traveling throughout the country preaching. Mrs. Wesley was thus left alone in London a great deal of the time. She writes to Samuel in December, 1739:

> You cannot more desire to see me, than I do to see you. Your brother, whom I shall henceforth call son Wesley, since my dear Sam is gone home, has just been with me, and much revived my spirits. Indeed, I have often

*Clarke, A. p. 407

found that he never speaks in my hearing without my receiving some spiritual benefit. But his visits are seldom and short, for which I never blame him, because I know he is well employed, and, blessed be God, hath great success in his ministry. But, my dear Charles, still I want either him or you; for indeed, in the most literal sense, I am become a little child, and want continual succor. "As iron sharpeneth iron, so doth the countenance of a man his friend." I feel much, comfort and support from religious conversation when I can obtain it. Formerly I rejoiced in the absence of company, and found the loss I had of creature comforts, the more I had from God. But alas! I am fallen from that spiritual converse I once enjoyed. And why is it so? Because I want faith. God is an omnipresent, unchangeable good, in whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning: the fault is in myself;and I attribute all mistakes in judgment, and all errors in practice, to want of faith in the Blessed Jesus. O, my dear, when I consider the dignity of his person, and perfection of his purity, the greatness of his sufferings, but, above all, his boundless love, I am astonished and utterly confounded; I am lost in thought! I fall into nothing before him! O how inexcusable is that person who has knowledge of these things and yet remains poor and low in faith and love! I speak as one guilty in this matter.

I have been prevented from finishing my letter. I complained I had none to converse with me on spiritual things; but for these several days I have had the conversation of many good Christians, who have refreshed in some measure my fainting spirits; and though they hindered my writing, yet it was a pleasing, and I hope not an unprofitable, interruption they gave me. I hope we shall shortly speak face to face; and I shall then, if God permit, impart my thoughts more fully. But then, alas! When you come, your brother leaves me! yet that is the will of God, in whose blessed service you are engaged; who has hitherto blessed your labors, and

> and preserved your persons. That he may continue so to prosper your work, and protect you both from evil, and give you strength and courage to preach the true gospel in opposition to the united powers of evil men and evil angels, is the hearty prayer of, dear Charles,
>
> Your loving mother,
> SUSANNA WESLEY*

After Mrs. Wesley went to reside in London where she could be more with her sons, she did very little writing. She was getting old and her physical condition was not very good, but she was able to be of some help to the boys. John was superintending the work of the societies throughout England, and it was during one of these absences that the question of employing lay preachers in the pulpits of the societies came into prominence. Mrs. Wesley approved most heartily of their preaching. During the absence of John, Mr. Thomas Maxfield, the first lay preacher among the Methodists, attempted to officiate among them, but as soon as Mr. Wesley heard of this, he hastened back to London. However, before taking any definite step in this matter, he consulted his mother on the subject. She, recognizing that Mr. Maxfield had preached with unction and feeling that he had a call from heaven, advised her son thus: "My son, I charge you before God, beware what you do; for Thomas Maxfield is as much called

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* Clarke, A. p 401

to preach the gospel as ever you were!" Thus Mrs. Wesley became the first to speak for the patronage of the lay preachers, and it was here that this practice originated in the Methodist movement.

Mrs. Wesley's health was failing fast, and as John has related it to us in his own words, "she was on the borders of eternity; but she had no doubts nor fear, nor any desire, but as God should call, 'to depart and be with Christ'."

About three o'clock in the afternoon of July 23rd, 1742, Mr. Wesley went to see his mother and found her very low. He sat down by her bedside. She was unable to speak, but seemed to be quite sensible. Her look was calm and serene, and her eyes were fixed upward, while she passed on to the great beyond. Just before she had lost her power of speech she had requested that they sing a Psalm as soon as she was set free, and that they did.

No doubt one of the hardest things that John Wesley had to do was to commit to earth the body of his dear mother. He had lost her personal contact, but with her memory remained those things that were of much more value to him, memories he could treasure in his heart that had a tremendous influence on him long after she had gone. The epithaph which was inscribed upon her tomb did not begin to express the worth of the personality of this dear woman. Her life was one filled

with affliction and pain, but yet she suffered this, keeping her will resigned entirely to the will of God. John's life and his far reaching influence is the greatest tribute that can be paid to a woman of such character as Mrs. Wesley.

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COMPREHENSIVE DIGEST

The influence of Susanna Wesley on the life and character of her son John began long before he was born. On his mother's side of the family was Mr. John White, a prominent clergyman and lawyer, and Dr. Samuel Annesley, a well educated man of high birth who became prominent in ecclesiastical and political affairs. It was during his lifetime that the Act of Uniformity was put into action. The Episcopal party and the Presbyterians were at the heighth of their conflicts. The controversy between these had reached a climax with the Declaration of Breda, in which Charles II promised help to the Dissenters, but, not being interested in the welfare of the nation, he allowed the Act of Uniformity to be passed. This was one of the most deplorable steps in the degradation of the Church of England. The Annesleys, as well as the Wesley's, were effected by the terrible ecclesiastical conditions that were brought about in England during this time.

Susanna was a beautiful girl of a pleasing personality and a strong mind. She was able to choose between Presbyterianism and Anglicanism at the age of thirteen. She showed in this act her strength of mind and her ability to choose

for herself, although her choice was entirely contrary to her father's beliefs. She was well educated and taught her children, giving them a sound foundation for their higher education. She was married to Samuel Wesley when she was nineteen or twenty. He was a man of noble birth whose parents also had met with the conflicts between the Episcopacy and Presbyterianism and were effected by these forces. Samuel had a strong personality, and was educated in Oxford, becoming interested especially in literary works. After their marriage, they lived in London and then moved to Epworth where they remained until after Mr. Wesley's death.

Mrs. Wesley began the teaching and training of her children from their childhood, using her own system of education. She began to teach each child when he was five, teaching him the alphabet in one day and the following day starting him to read in the book of Genesis. Each child was taught reverence to God, his parents, and his brothers and sisters. Outside of her teaching, Mrs. Wesley also had time to devote an hour each day to private devotions. Her many duties as a wife and mother did not prevent her from taking a special personal interest in the spiritual welfare of each child. She consulted with them individually one evening out of every week and John's night was Thursday. Even after he was away at Oxford, he wrote to her asking her to please spare him that little portion of

Thursday evening and continue to remember him in her private meditations.

Mrs. Wesley's special concern for John began at the time of the Epworth fire when John was almost burned to death. This awoke in Mrs. Wesley's heart the realization that John's life had been spared for some special purpose and it was for that reason that she took a special interest in him from that day forward.

John was sent to Charterhouse to school. He was thus separated from his mother, but he never forgot the training she gave him. His actions in school reflect the training at home. He followed his father's advice, exercising each day, and was able to keep healthy and strong. Mrs. Wesley's influence is shown in a very pronounced way through the letters she wrote to her son in Charterhouse and Oxford. It was during his last year at Charterhouse that the mysterious "noises" began to be heard at Epworth. Mrs. Wesley wrote to her son concerning this, after he had inquired from her the details in the matter.

He entered Christ's Church College Oxford, and there excelled in his scholastic attainments, becoming interested in Literary Criticism, Oriental Languages and the study of Divinity. We know that he was confronted with financial problems there, for in one of Mrs. Wesley's letters, she urges him to pay his debts as soon as possible.

John sought his mother's advice on many different subjects. Some of these are discussed in letters which I have recorded, and deal with subjects that require profound thought and much study, while others are common ordinary problems. John recognized the strength of mind of which his mother was possessed and had confidence in her ability to help him in the solution of these deeper problems. Some of these subjects were: Thomas a Kempis, Jeremiah Taylor, the question of Repentance, Predestination, the Ordinances of the Church of England, and Love.

He was ordained in 1725 and the following year he was elected fellow at Lincoln College. Here he became interested in poetry and began to translate verses from the Greek and Latin, and also translated his father's work on "Job." He was elected Greek Lecturer and Moderator of the classes at Oxford and upon his arrival in this new College, he decided to make a rigid reform and follow a regular schedule for his work in order not to waste time in idle conversation. In this action we see clearly the reflection of his mother's example at home. He remained in Oxford and became the leader of the little club which his brother and some other young men of the College had started. This later came to be known as the "Holy Club."

Upon his father's death in 1735, John was asked to take the curacy of Epworth but he refused this offer for reasons which he considered to be legitimate. Mrs. Wesley was very anxious for John to come to Epworth to continue his father's work, but she felt that he was capable of deciding the problem for himself therefore, she did not urge him to come against his will. John remained in Oxford and his reason for doing so was that he felt he could do more good to himself there than if he had taken the Epworth curacy. It was only a short while after he had turned down this offer that he decided to go to Georgia to evangelize the Indians. However, before he consented to go to Georgia, he consulted his mother on the question and to this she replied, "Had I twenty sons, I should rejoice that they were all so employed, though I should never see them more." John interpreted her reply as the voice of Providence and went to Georgia.

We have but little of the correspondence that passed between John and Mrs. Wesley after the death of Mr. Wesley, but the little we have is filled with helpful advice and information that was of much benefit to John in later years.

John returned to England with a strong determination to preach "Justification by Faith", a doctrine which he had learned from the Moravian Missionaries in Georgia. His zeal in the preaching of this new doctrine soon became more than what the conservative High Church Anglicans could stand, and

it was not long before he was put out of the churches of England and refused permission to preach in them. He then resorted to field preaching, a practice which he himself tells us was against his own High Chruch views, but this was his only alternative and for this reason he accepted it rather than to give up his "calling".

At first Mrs. Wesley did not understand John's position and because of letters that she had received from her son Samuel asking her to advise John against his radical turn of mind, she wrote to John for information on the matter. However, when she was able to see John face to face and talk the matter over with him, she was completely won over to his opinion and became one of the faithful members of the little Fetter Lane society in London.

Mrs. Wesley took an active part in the affairs of the society while in London, especially during John's absence. It was during one of his absences that the question of employing lay preachers in the pulpits of the societies came up. Mrs. Wesley approved most heartily of their preaching, but John was not in favor. However, John became convinced that his mother's views on the matter were correct and it was here that the practice originated.

Mrs. Wesley lived in London until her death. There is no doubt but that her influence upon the life of John was the chief factor in the foundation of the Methodist movement.

It was not long before it was not out of the possession of Tsa-
ngyang but returned [illegible] to power in Lhasa. He came re-
turned to Lhasa [illegible], a position which he [illegible] held
by the [illegible] the Dalai Lama's flight, and this was the only
[illegible] and yet this [illegible] be [illegible] to
[illegible] in the [illegible].

At first [illegible], [illegible] the [illegible] Dalai's [illegible]
and [illegible] of [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible]

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